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Flying Snake

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Monsters in Lake Geneva Black Squirrels a history of them in Britain Kangaroos on the loose in Britain Huge Sharks Part Two of Kangaroos in USA Rare bat found in Kent Odd Orange Creature Survival of the Passenger Pigeon Boy with hundreds of teeth And More!

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Dr Devo`s Diary

"For I pray God for the introduction of new creatures into this island. For I pray God for the ostriches of Salisbury Plain, the beavers of the Medway and silver fish of Thames." *Christopher Smart `Rejoice in the Lamb`. Poet, naturalist, lunatic (1722-1771)*

So here we are again with another exciting assortment of zoological anomalies and oddities for your delight. Whilst most of the UK is absorbed in the highways and byways of Brexit, I am beavering away in the archives of the equally complex but by no means tedious world of cryptozoology and fortunately for you, the future of British democracy does not depend on the progress I make...Or lack of, as the case may be. As doomsters predict riots on the streets of Britain due the lack of progress, I was going to predict that Nessie is a giant eel but I have been beaten to that! In this issue we have some very interesting research by Bob Skinner into the history of the black squirrel in Britain and also the long overdue part two of kangaroos in America. The first episode of this appeared way back in Volume 3 issue 8, December 2014. I am particularly grateful to Mike Hardcastle for creating the collage you can see on the back cover of the covers of issues 1—15 of Flying Snake. THANK YOU Mike! The ever-industrious Ulrich Magin (who does a regular monthly round-up of continental European Forteana in Fortean Times by the way) is back with ` Monsters in Lake Geneva`. Javier Resines is here with `Marine Monsters on Spanish Beaches`.I have again included the `Letters from Fate` section as Gary Mangiacopra my American Fortean friend has sent me more materiel. I also have a few letters from Shane Lea who is interested in giant sharks amongst other things. I am pleased to say the Centre for Fortean Zoology is publishing a 2020 CFZ Yearbook; the first Yearbook for several years.

Monsters in Lake Geneva
Ulrich Magin

With 581 square kilometres of surface, Lake Geneva, or Lac Léman, is one of the largest lakes of Central Europe, after Lake Balaton and before Lake Constance. It is 72 km long, up to 13.8 km wide, with an average depth of 100 m and a maximum one of 309 m. The kidney-shaped body of water lies partly in France and partly in Switzerland. Geneva, Montreux and Lausanne are the most famous cities on its banks.

Water gods

Caesar, in his *Gallic Wars*, mentions the lake (1), but offers nothing remarkable.

However, there are indications that the lake was regarded as a dangerous entity that had to be appeased. Two blocks of granite in the harbour of Geneva are called the "stones of Neptune," here, allegedly, sacrifices were made to water gods in the Bronze Age. (2) At the beginning of the 18th century, Johann Heinrich Zedler wrote in his *Universal Lexicon*: "At Genff you see 2 rocks coming out of the lake, round at the top, which are called Pierre Neiton (Petra or Ara Neptuni), on which the Pagan inhabitants of the region used to sacrifice Neptuno, as the fishermen with their nets once hauled a Priestly Battle Axe and a Sacrificial Knife from this place." (3)

A late Roman shield with two dolphins in dragon form was found at Geneva (4), but it would certainly be a bit too much to take these mythical animals for a faithful image of an animal in Lake Geneva.Zedler reports not only on the Neptune stone, but also on an unspecified "vermin" in the lake, which was dangerous to fishing. In the usage of his time, vermin were poisonous reptiles and amphibians. "Riva, a port on Lake Geneva in the Pais de Vaud, in Switzerland, near Lausanne in the Canton of Berne, is where you board ships when you go across Lake Geneva. This harbour is protected by a strong castle. Some allege that the vermin makes the travel in ships cumbersome; but the facts are indeed quite different." (5) Zedler omits to give what he thinks was a real reason…

"**A giant eel?**On the July 24, 2010 blog of the *British Centre for Fortean Zoology*, Mike Hallowell reported on about "giant eels" in the lake.

In the thirteenth century William, Bishop of Lausanne, started to receive complaints from fishermen that they were being "troubled by eels". Some were simply scaring the fish. Others – of an altogether larger variety - were supposedly gobbling up the fishermen.
William decided that the Devil was behind it all (he was to blame for everything in those days) and promptly carried out an exorcism.
Unfortunately the eels apparently didn't attend and were unaware that they'd been banished to a remote part of the lake where they couldn't cause any more trouble.
Since then, stories of the giant eels have persisted, although most modern Genevans I spoke to seemed blissfully unaware of their presence."
Hallowell suspected monster eels were still seen in the lake today, but nobody would admit that. (6)
This must be based on a misunderstanding. Eels are extremely rare in Lake Geneva, which is a well-known fact among naturalists, as the barrier at Bellegarde can only be passed by eels when the river Rhone is in high water. And regarding the good bishop: "The supposed absence of the eel in Lake Geneva was blamed by an old doctor, named Paullini, on Bishop William of Lausanne, who, after eating an eel, suffered from the influence of his rotten stomach, and cast a ban over all the eels in Lake Geneva, a ban which now has lasted for three centuries." (7)So the eels of Lake Geneva were monstrous only for the stomach of Bishop William.

The Lake Alligator: June 1907 and August 1950
On June 23, 1907, the newspaper *Telegraph-Herald* from Dubuque reported on its p. 10 on "Fresh Water Monsters" in Switzerland". The first entry was about Lake Constance, where a shark had been caught by a trawler in the lake and brought to the aquarium in Lindau, the second was about Lake Geneva: 'An even stranger "catch" was that an angler at the Rhone mouth of Lake Geneva, who landed the carcass of a fine Mississippi crocodile, about eighteen inches long. This curiosity has been exhibited at the rooms of the Vaud Naturalist society. How it got into the lake is a mystery.'
With the second alligator of the lake, the solution is simpler - but not without interesting secondary aspects. We best recount the story on form of newspaper articles on the whole series of events.

"Alligator Loose in a Swiss Lake. Geneva, Switzerland. An alligator got loose in Lake Geneva near here Thursday [3 August 1950] to the consternation of lakeside residents.
From descriptions it appears that the reptile is a Mississippi alligator that escaped from a fisherman who had bought four because, according to the Tribune de Geneve, 'he adores animals.'
The alligator, the sole survivor of the four original pets, got away as he was being taken for a swim in the lake." (8)
"CROCODILE IN LAKE. A crocodile, 4½ feet long and with not a tooth missing, is loose in the Lake of Geneva, where thousands of visitors bathe.
The crocodile had been kept in an artificial pond near the lake until its owner released it the other day to see it in its natural surroundings for a short time. The crocodile scared by bathers, swam into deeper waters, and has not been seen since." (9)
"A crocodile one and a half metre in length was lost in lake Geneva, the bather's paradise. A hunt has been organized, bathers have been warned.
The crocodile belongs to one [André, from other sources] Wohler, of Lausanne, who let it swim for a few moments in its native element. The crocodile, perhaps frightened by bathers, fled into deeper waters." (10)
"Swiss Lake Too Much For Mississippi Gator. LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Aug 14 (AP) — Bathers tested the waters of Lake Geneva unworriedly today — the danger that an alligator might nibble their toes was over The four-foot Mississippi alligator which escaped into the lake from a reptile collection near here last week was found dead on the opposite shore of the lake in Thonon, France. Apparently it had been struck by a motorboat propeller." (11) The Spanish newspaper *ABC* (12) has the same text, but gives the crocodile the name Ali.
Not so fast! "The adventures of the crocodile lost in Geneva / The animal has been seen alive.
The news that crocodile Ali has been found dead is not true.
A conservator of the Zoo of this city declared that the saurian has been seen, and that authorities will equip every citizen who takes part in the hunt with all weapons they need. The report adds that they are certain that the saurian will increase tourism." (13)
Then, Ali was finally caught.
"'Ali' nabbed. Schoolboys Tag Terror of Lake. LAUSANNE Switzerland Aug. 24 – (Reuters) – Schoolboys have recaptured Ali,

the four and one-half-foot alligator who was dubbed the 'Terror of Lake Geneva.'
They saw his tail sticking out of some rocks at the edge of the lake Tuesday and tied a handkerchief to it.
They tried to haul him out but Ali was too heavy.
Then Ali's owner, Andre Wohler, reptile collector, arrived on the scene with a big suitcase. He bundled Ali inside – alive but 'a trifle thin.'
The big scare started three weeks ago when Wohler took Ali from his private aquarium for an outing on the edge of the lake to see how he behaved in 'natural surroundings.' Ali jumped in and bathers jumped out. "(14)
"Alligator Leaves Lake Geneva. STAFF CORRESPONDENT. LONDON, August 24. – Lake Geneva is free of the alligator which escaped into it on August 10 and has since prevented thousands of holidayers from enjoying their swimming
The alligator escaped when its owner, Mr. E. Wohler, of Lausanne, took it from its artificial pond for a swim.
Schoolboys saw the alligator among rocks by the lake yesterday and called Wohler, who took it home.
The alligator is well, but 'a little thin.'" (15)
In a nutshell, and using all available sources, on August 3, 1950, the reptile lover André Wohler from Paudex near Lausanne took his 1.35 m Mississippi alligator Ali from the pool in his property, where he held it and brought it to the Lake Geneva shore near Lausanne. The alligator, evidently scared by a few swimmers, did not return to the shore, but fled. Wohler suspected the reptile would go to a river mouth where there the water is warmer. Panic spread among the bathers. Until the 14th of August when the animal was found dead on a rock on the beach of Thonon-les-Bain in France, on the opposite shore. The animal had a gaping wound in the side, possibly from a motor boat. On 16 August, however, the discovery was denied. Depending on the source, it had been either a misunderstanding or "the catch of the alligator was a photomontage of a newspaper." Unfortunately I do not have the French newspaper reports that could provide clarity here. Then, Ali was caught on 24 August, near Lausanne – the animal had moved not far from the place where it had escaped. Paudex schoolchildren saw the beast whose tail protruded from some rocks on the shore.

The lake monster in the 1950s and 1960s

In July 1951, the next horror plagued the Valais.

Monster' Terrorizes Town. Geneva, Switzerland, Oct. 27 (Reuters)–
Four persons claim to have seen a huge unidentified beast which has been described as a large animal with big, padded feet and a long tail, which escaped into the forest with prodigious leaps. (16) Whether this has to be classed as a tatzelwurm-like hairy reptile, or an early case of ABC, is hard to tell.
The French crypto-zoologist Jean-Jacques Barloy received an eyewitness account about the appearance of a lake serpent in the Bay of Thonon on the French southern shore of Lake Geneva which he briefly outlined in his newsletter (17): "A 'monster' in Lake Geneva (Excenevex), 1958 (C. Baroche)"
"There is a very disturbing report, put of Geneva", says *The Sun* newspaper in Baltimore, Md., in 1964, (18)."and if we did not know the correspondent who sent it we would think he made it up It is about Lake Geneva the one with the big jet spouting into the air Lake Geneva is rocking The water in it is sloshing back and forth like coffee in the morning saucer. It is the first time that the Loch Ness monster has changed nationality."
Unfortunately, I have not been able to find further reports in other newspapers, but we will later hear more about this phenomenon.

The 1990s

To celebrate the 700th anniversary of Switzerland in August 1991, the artist group "Groupe Lac-Bleu" erected a statue of a lake monster with a small head, yellow eyes and wide-open mouth, a long neck, a snaky tail and a hump with green scales and a red crest in the lake near Vevey "to surprise the population" (19).Episode 20 of the children's thriller series "Le Trio de l'Etrange" by Francis Valéry was published in 2001 under the title, "Le Mystère Rosenberg." The 140-page novel is about a monster in Lake Geneva
"Who said," says the ad for the book, "that Lausanne is a quiet city? The Trio de l'Etrange resumes its service as a wave of collective hallucinations seizes the city. First, the dragon sculptures suddenly come to life and fly away on market day. Then, a really impossible lake monster attacks the sailing ship of our friends on Lake Geneva and threatens to capsize it. Common to all these strange occurrences is a young red-haired girl who has a weird booklet ... A booklet that could well conceal the key of this new mystery." (20)
The last card is a photo of the monster ... of Lake Geneva!" (21)
Therefore, the 1990s were a time of art, but not accrual reports.

From the same time (dated September 5, 2001) dates a French web site with fake photos, which also contains a photo of the "Monster of Lake Geneva." Webmaster is a Dominique Morlet, the photos are by Morlet Bourges. "I show some very strange postcards here. Fraud or reality? Therefore, the 1990s were a time of art, but not actual reports.

The 21st century

In a discussion of sightings of monsters in Lake Maggiore in the old forum of the German website "Der Einsame Schütze" (22) user Demon wrote on May 7, 2003 that he had seen similar humps as had been observed by other users: "I have already observed this phenomenon myself, but not only on Lake Maggiore, but also on Lake Geneva and (more than once) on Lake Zurich too. In science, it is known as Zeiche (pronounced Sesh) or the 'three sisters' and is often the cause for monster sightings in lakes. The smoother the lake is, by the way, the more likely it is. In essence, it is nothing more than a wave caused by low winds which looks like two, mostly three, 'humps.'" We will return to the question of seches soon. (23)

Finally, on Saturday, June 12, 2004, a M. Wittram was on a bike tour along the north shore of the lake when he took a rest between Nyon and Lausanne on the shore. He suddenly noticed two grebes fleeing, then the curved back of an animal appeared, then it disappeared again, then it appeared again. It was no fish, and bigger than a rat. He could only assume that it was a beaver, an otter or a Swiss Nessie. (24)

Less mysterious is a photo of a monster of Lake Geneva published by the Swiss tabloid *Blick* on October 3, 2007 under the headline "Nessie in Lake Geneva." The picture shows four elephants of the Circus Knie bathing off the beach of Bellerive near Lausanne in the lake.

In 2010, English crypto-zoologist Mike Hallowell travelled to Lake Geneva in search of monster eels. About his inquiries among the locals, he writes:

"At Port Noir I talked to some locals.'Yes, I've heard the stories', a young man called George told me. 'Do I believe them? I don't know. One day, you know, I thought…but no; it was my imagination, I think.' [...]

Leaving the Solaris – a fine vessel – we transferred to the older L'eau de Vive. I talked to one of the passengers, a young woman who, in a decidedly frosty manner, made it quite clear that she a) didn't believe in the eels and b) didn't want to feed the paranoid delusions of mad Englishmen who came to Switzerland hunting for them. True, I really

was paranoid, deluded, mad and English, but surely she could have been a tad more sympathetic. Oh, well. You can't win 'em all, I suppose.As the L'eau de Vive docked at Perle du Lac it dawned on me that Genevans do not seem to have the same thirst for mysteries as we do. Back at my hotel I talked to waiters, bar staff and tourists. Some had heard of the eels; others had not. Intriguingly, none seemed to have the faintest interest in finding out the truth.

'If they're there, they're there…' policeman Norman Gross told me." (25) As this survey has shown, there never ever was talk about giant eels in Lake Geneva, so the local reluctance is understandable even without them being not interested. What we have, though, is the next case of escaped crocodile. The report dates Tuesday, 14 June 2016.

"CROCODILE FOUND IN LAKE GENEVA

It was a little more than 14h, Saturday afternoon, when the animal came up the dark waters of Lake Geneva. These are two fishermen who quickly raised the alarm.

While the two friends were teasing bream and bolts of the river, the reptile attacked violently in their baskets before reaching the shore. Frightened, they left their equipment on site and alerted authorities.

Facing danger, a series of photos was taken before the animal decides to return to the water. The crocodile, estimated length of 4 meters and charging more than 300 kg, would be directed to the main basin of the port.

The duck population decreased.

Then a vast operation was put in place so that the animal can emerge. Lawrence Lacoste, reptile specialist quickly intervened to place a mesh at the mouth of the site, isolating the reptile and this in the baiting by a gamey meat.

If the source of such an animal in these waters is still unknown, Lawrence Lacoste makes a first hypothesis. 'These animals are sold commercially. Perhaps he escaped from her owner through drains. I learned that the duck population had declined for some time near the site. This is an animal that is discrete. He may be there for a while, 'said the expert. Still subject to very strict legislation, it is not unusual to find snakes or other dangerous spiders in ever more unusual places." (26)

Mermaids

On the capitals of the Romanesque columns in Geneva's Cathedral St -Pierre (beginning of construction 1160) one can see representations

of "grotesque monsters and a bare-breasted, double-tailed mermaid" –all motives that were not uncommon in the art of the era. The replica of the "little mermaid" from Copenhagen sits on a flat rock in the waters of a small harbour near Geneva.

The bronze statue of the "Sirene du Leman" was created by artist Natacha de Senger, and erected in 1966.

Monsters in the river system of the Rhone

The Rhone flows through Lake Geneva and finally by a delta in the Mediterranean Sea. At Lyon, where the river turns south, it takes on the river Saone, which itself received the Doubs from the Swiss Jura. River monsters have been reported in all parts of this large system.
In June 1934 anglers observed one in the Doubs.
"Switzerland has River Monster.
GENEVA, June 19 (AP) – Switzerland now boasts a terrifying river monster, one which would put the famous resident of Loch Ness into the shade.
Anglers, who claim to have seen it disporting in the River Doubs said it had an oval-shaped body, long neck, small head, blue back and yellow stomach. It travels with an undulating motion, they said.
The fishermen indignantly denied they were the victims of hallucinations and are keeping a night and day watch for the monster."(27)
From the Saone there are rumours – and this is a typical modern legend – of huge catfish, which are so large that they sink boats. Once divers had gone underwater beneath a bridge piers and were scared by the huge shadows of the fish. (28).
In the Rhone itself (29) a water monster was sighted in 1954/1955. At Tarascon in southern France, the Rhone divides into two arms. In the town, once a year, the large model of the Tarasque is carried through the streets, a dragon which is said to have made the area unsafe in the Middle Ages and which was s caught by St Margaret.
In the Carmargue, between the arms of the river, the Grand and the Petit Rhone, lies the lagoon of Vaccares. The Provencal poet Joseph d'Arbaut tells us that this was the home of a monster.
These are not just legends: At the end of May and early June 1964, Jacques Borelli and his son fished at the Balancelle buoy at the mouth of the Grand Rhone, when a sea serpent popped up in front of them. "Then there appeared a sort of beam, light chestnut, cylindrical in

shape and with a rounded end. This 'beam' if which the part out of the water must have measured 6 feet in length and about a foot in diameter, was sloping forward and moved without our being able to see any wake at that distance, then it disappeared after about 30 seconds." (30)

Waves without wind

"Waves without Wind" is on Renaissance maps next to some lakes (such as Loch Ness or Loch Tay in Scotland). Cryptozoologists often interpret this as an allusion to lake monsters, but such stories are known to have been caused by earthquakes (resulting in tsunamis) or be meteorological conditions, forming seiches or standing waves on lake's surfaces. We have seen some stories about monsters in Lake Geneva, such as the 1964 newspaper report, or Demon's sightings in the 2000's, have been *caused by* seiches. In brief, seiches are caused when air pressure on one part of a lake becomes less, which makes the lake swing like water in a bathtub. This results in ebbs and flows, but also in single waves running along the surface.
Lake Geneva is particularly famous for waves without wind, and here it was that the Seiches phenomenon was first scientifically described (the places where seiches were first identified after that were … Loch Ness and Lake Champlain). Although the first scientific description (with the correct explanation of the phenomenon) was made by F. A. Forel in his work "Le Léman" in 1892–95, there is a wealth of previously reported anecdotal evidence. Mixing tsunamis with real seiches, we read in a 19th century account of seiches in the lake:
"In an earthquake on March 1, 1584 at noon, which was especially felt at Greifen-See in the canton of Zurich and at Aigle, the 'Lake of Geneva withdrew, so that a dry foot one could have passed it with dry feet, but that didn't last long.' […] On 16 September 1600 an earthquake occurred to Geneva, which at the outflow of the Rhodan from the lake by rising and lowering of the ground caused a four-fold withdrawal and return of the river. On January 19, 1645, a very strong hurricane raged all over Switzerland from the west. It even fell walls and towers, and people thought they felt an earthquake. The Rhodan was dammed in Geneva." (31) The amplitude of the seiche of 1600 was one meter (32)In 1730, the city engineer of Geneva, Fatio de Dullier, mentions the word seiche for the first time. On November 1, 1755, the day of the great Lisbon earthquake, strange waves appeared on many European lakes – from Loch Ness in the north to Lake Maggiore in the south. Lake Geneva also "withdrew for a few moments" (33).

"At the eastern end of Lake Geneva, we noticed a three-fold swelling and sinking of the water level at Vevey, Latour, Villeneuve and Chillon. The springs at Montreux, Blonay and Corsler all the way to Villeneuve and Aigle suddenly became more or less cloudy." (34)
Geneva on August 3, 1763 that had an amplitude of almost one and half a metre (35).
In October 1841, Lake Geneva had an "exceptionally strong external seiche [that is, caused by atmospheric pressure] with an amplitude of 1.87 meters and a period of 73 minutes." The lake rocked for a full 7 days and 17 minutes. (36)
The "sudden rise and fall of Lake Geneva, Switzerland" which puzzled Charles Fort, the founder of anomalistics, was another such meteorological seiche. (37). We learn more about this occurrence in "Science Siftings", by 'Volt', in the *New Zealand Tablet* (38): "The Lake of Geneva. According to M. Boson, a Swiss meteorologist, the Lake of Geneva possesses the quality of a kind of natural seismometer in the case of volcanoes. The lake seems to be liable to periods of severe depression and of equally severe upheaval, and these violent oscillations are, according to the professor, merely the outward signs of agitation in the bowels of the earth which may be relied upon to break out somewhere, on the surface." Therefore, even early in the 20th century, there we still people who thought seiches were connected to volcanoes!
In addition to the meteorologically produced Seiches, Lake Geneva is known for its tsunami phenomena, which occur in all deep Alpine lakes. Mentioned in medieval sources and geologically proven is a major event from the year 563, in which a landslide from Mount Grammont caused a massive tidal wave that rolled along the entire lake and struck in Geneva against the shore, where numerous casualties were to be lamented (39). During the great earthquake of Lisbon in 1755, as reported by Bertand Elie (1713–1797) in his book "Mémoire pour servir à l 'historie des terre de la Suisse", the waters of Lake Geneva came into "brusque motion" (40)

Underwater UFOs

Just for completeness' sake, here are a few strange reports that may or may not have any bearing on monster stories from Lake Geneva. A "ghost ship" observed on the lake in September 1818 was only a mirage, for which Lake Geneva is said to be well-known (41).
In 1956, a UFO submerged into the lake: "From Morges (Lake Geneva) on May 6 [1956], from 20:32 to 20:37 walkers observed a fiery ball, it moved towards the lake and finally fell into the water about

100 m from the shore. The police have registered the matter, Gazette du Lausanne ', 7.5.1956" (42)
On 16 August 1958, a bright light approached a dozen people who in perfect weather conditions were on a boat in the Swiss part of Lake Geneva. The UFO hovered 15 meters above them. It had the shape of a saucer, was about 10 meters in diameter, and had a cabin above and several windows. The disc around the cabin turned. When the UFO hovered above the lake, it created a current, then 'hopped' into the air and shot off 'at incredible speed'. (43)

Notes

1. Caesar: *Gallic Wars* 1,2,3; 1, 8,1,1; 3,1,1; the Roman name was Lemannus lacus.
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3. *Universal Lexicon*, vol 10, p. 451
4. Geoffrey Ashe, ed: *The Quest for Arthur's Britain*, Granada: London 1971, p. 164
5. *Universal Lexicon*, vol 31, p. 931
6. Mike Hallowell: *Giant Eels*. http://forteanzoology.blogspot.com/2010/07/mike-hallowell-giant-eels.html; 24 July 2010
7. *Allgemeine Fischereizeitung: Neue Folge der Bayerischen Fischereizeitung. Organ für die Gesamtinteressen der Fischerei sowie für die Bestrebungen der Fischereivereine insonderheit Organ des Deutschen Fischereivereins*. In Verbindung mit Fachmännern Deutschlands, Oesterreich-Ungarns u. der Schweiz, vol 27–28, 1902, p. 33
8. *Milwaukee Journal*, 8 August 1950; *Montreal Gazette*, 11 August 1950
9. *Irish Times*, 11 August 1950
10. *La Vanguardia*, 12 August 1950, p. 7
11. *Miami News*, August 14, 1950; *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, August 14, 1950
12. *ABC*, 15 August 1950, p. 9
13. *La Vanguardia*, 16 August 1950, p. 8
14. *Vancouver Sun*, 24 August 1950
15. *Sydney Morning Herald*, Aug 25, 1950; *ABC*, Seville, August 31, 1950, p. 10
16. *Reading Eagle* 27 October 1951, p. 56; *Los Angeles Times*, 30 October 1951

17. Jean-Jacques Barloy: *Enquete* # 35
8. *The Sun* 6 April 1964, p. 22
19. www.scout-ch / lac-bleu / activities / ph-911.htm, accessed in 2010 and no longer working.
20. http://www.cadranbleu.com/auteurs/FrancisValery.html
21. http://www.tronches-de-net.com/zoom/86.php; accessed in 2001 and no longer working.
22. www.einsamer-schuetze.com; again, it can no longer be accessed.
23. On seiches, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seiche
24. www.tu-bs.de:8080/~wittram/reisen/Schweiz2004/Schweiz2004_2_engl.html, in English, http://www.tu-bs.de:8080/~wittram/reisen/Schweiz2004/Schweiz2004_2.html, in German, and both versions no longer accessible.
25. Mike Hallowell, see note 6.
26. http://saisi--news.blogspot.com/2016/06/crocodile-found-in-lake-geneva.html, accessed on 2 July 2019, and thanks to Richard Muirhead for finding it.
27. *The Telegraph*, Nashua, N.H. 19 June 1934, p. 2; *Spokane Daily Chronicle* 19 June 1934, p. 14; *Los Angeles Times* 20 June 1934
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29. Letter from J. J. Barloy, 4 August 1984
30. Bernard Heuvelmans: *In the Wake of the Sea Serpents*. Hill & Wang, New York 1968, p. 528
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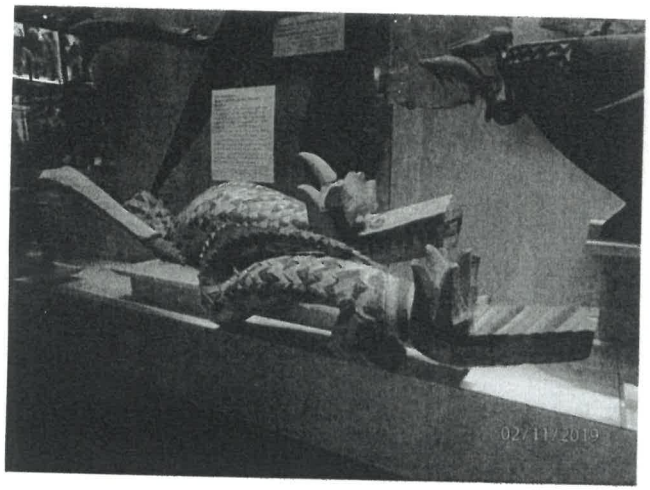
32. *Annual Review of Fluid Mechanics* 1974, p. 17
33. Volger, p. 157
34. Dr. Emil Kluge, p. 806
35. Gehler: *Physikalisches Wörterbuch* 1836, p. 738
36. http://18.1911encyclopedia.org/G/GE/GENEVA_LAKE_OF.htm
37. Charles Fort: *The Complete Books*. New York, Dover 1974, p. 812
38. *New Zealand Tablet*, 20 December 1906, p. 35
1969, p. 272, case 469

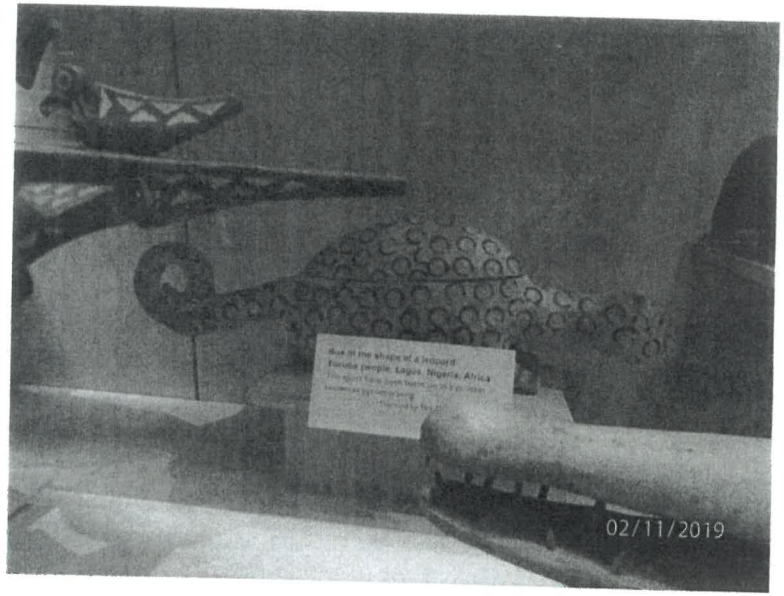
39. On 17 November 2018, French-German TV channel *arte* screened a documentary on this tsunami in Lake Geneva. Another report can be found in *Fortean Times* 296, p. 25. A little googling will quickly find dozens of scientific papers on Lake Geneva tsunamis.
40. *Cercle vadois de généalogie*, No 58, October 2005, p. 4
41. Helmut Tributsch *Das Rätsel der Götter*. Frankfurt: Ullstein 1983, p. 85
42. *Weltraumbote* 8, July 1956, p. 17
43. Jacques Valleé: *Passport to Magonia*. Henry Regnery: Chicago 1969, p. 272, case 469

Ulrich Magin is a fortean and cryptozoology researcher living near Bonn, Germany. He is author of the book *Investigating the Impossible: Sea-Serpents in the Air, Volcanoes that Aren't, and Other Out-of-Place Mysteries* published by Anomalist Books in 2011.

Photos taken by Andy Scott at Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford November 2019

These photos were taken on a rainy November 2nd at the Pitt Rivers Museum , part of Oxford University, by friend Andy "Batfish" Scott





Some notes on the prehistory of the Loch Ness monster, and on strange stories from the loch

Ulrich Magin

Checking through the British Newspaper Archive, and looking for monster stories in the *Inverness Courier*, I came across the following stuff on kelpies, mermaids, monsters, and forteana around Scotland's most famous body of water (often just fragments of sentences, so in case of interest you'll have to go to the relevant issue).

<u>*Kelpie*</u>:

> "… which the devil once rode the mysterious water horse of the Highlands. His bridle has been an heir-loom in the family for several generations. The advice was taken, and the wizard, who seemed perfectly well acquainted with all the circumstances of the ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 17 February 1830, p. 3)

> "Northern Expedition ... the bit of a horse's bridle, which in the days of yore was sported by a mischievous water Kelpie, who haunted the banks of Loch Ness and Loch Spynie, decked out in the similitude and trappings of a tine riding horse, for the purpose of entrapping weary travellers ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 16 October 1833, p. 2 and 3)

> "To the Editor of the Inverness Courier. Sir, – In the Courier of the 17th inst. extracts are given from a ... underwent this metamorphosis; or, seeing that this amphibious creature is styled Seilch-uisg, or water snail, more commonly than Each-uisg, or water horse, whether he may not have a legendary existence in memory of former visits to these coasts of the ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 31 January 1861, p. 6)

> North ... lonely pools and dark mysterious tarns, beneath the fathomless depths of which the terror-inspiring and redoubtable water bull or water horse was erst dwell his gorgeous cavern home. Nothing very bad, it is true, could charged against the Oalhnule personally ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 24 May 1866, p. 3)

> "The Old Legends and Superstitions of the Hebrides ... be pronounced to be quite extinct. The Second-sight has vanished utterly, even in Skye, once its chief theatre. The Water-kelpie has not been seen by any one now living. The Brownie or 'Gruagach' has long since ceased to haunt any farm-yard. Dead-lights ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 20 June 1867, p. 3)

> "Nether Lochaber ... The reader must know that the H'uftr[??] of the South of Scotland is also a prominent character in Highland superstition. The Kelpy, or generally represented the male sa [??] of a form rude, indeed, and grotesque, but, upon the whole, of human shape; cross ... caressed, never beopeoly [??] challenged or defiant[??] while the waters the South can only […] their Kelpy, those of the North are the habitation not only of the uiritj[??], but of water-horse and water-bull [illegible Gaelic word] well." (*Inverness Courier*, 5 November 1874, p. 3)

> "... Robert became terrified. The island was an 'eerie' spot at all hours, and awfully solitary at night. Thoughts of the water elf and water horse, that most terrible of Highland orgres, came into his mind. To pass whole night alone upon the island was far more ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 5 March 1895, p. 3) /

<u>*Lake Monster*</u>:

> "The Monster Fish in the Island of Lews. We have received the following letter from gentleman in London, corroborating the statement of our Stornoway correspondent, that a fish of gigantic size had been seen a loch near Leurbost, in the island of Lews ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 13 March 1856, p. 6)

<u>*Sea-serpent*</u>: "On Thursday while some fishermen belonging to Usan were at the out-sea fishing, they drew up what appeared to them young

sea serpent, and no time in bring the young monster to the secretary of our Museum. The animal, whatever it may called, still alive ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 1 February 1849, p. 3)

Mermaids:

"The Mermaid. The following article is from the Galway Advertiser: The appearance of the animal here described (if without offence the Poets we may call her so,) coincides in every particular with the account given the Mermaid that was seen some years ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 14 October 1819, p.4)

"Miscellaneous. Some descendant of Solomon has wisely remarked that those who go to law for damages are sure to get ... showman, who was exhibiting Mermaid at Durham, was taken into custody the other day, constable, unbelieving dog, having conceived that the mermaid was not real, wanting all those charms which (as Tennyson makes his Mermaid sing) could so fire the inmates ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 29 November 1849, p. 4)

"... good honest tapster, and to all this he only says be will maintain till the day of his death that it was a mermaid he saw, and nothing but a mermaid." (*Inverness Courier*, 22 August 1850, p. 3)

"Nether-Lochaber ... existence of Mermen and Mermaids been held so long, and held fixedly and firmly, as among the Highlanders and Hebrideans of the West of Scotland. Besides meeting with her in many a Gaelic song and many a fireside tale, the Mermaid is still – and quite as ... that is, the descendants of the sea maiden or mermaid. The story is that mermaid, whilst temporarily in human form, was captured a man who was by himself for several days and nights on an ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 6 September 1895, p. 3)

Nonesuch: "Flying[?] Fish ... very strong sensation was excited a few days ago in the vicinity of Wandsworth by the appearance of extraordinary animal, which was observed floating slowly through the air nearly over the village. Its appearance, which was that of a fish of about ..." (*Inverness Courier*, 24 June 1829, p. 2)

All in all, 15 previously unknown stories in the *Courier* about aquatic monsters. Would they really have missed Nessie? And, what is more, strange, bizarre and fortean stories from the loch were in newspapers

monsters. Would they really have missed Nessie? And, what is more, strange, bizarre and fortean stories from the loch were in newspapers all over the world.

Forteana

"The Inverness Courier mentions a singular feat of a cat, which leaped into Loch Ness and seized a fine trout, which it drew ashore and triumphantly devoured." (*The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser* (NSW) 7 August 1847, p. 3; *Sydney Chronicle* (NSW) 11. August 1847 p. 4)

"RELICS OF THR REBELLION IN 1745.-On Friday last, June 4th, as some men were engaged in the drainage of Loch Farraline [today the northern part of Loch Mhòr], in this county, they came upon a quantity of old firearms, a brass blunderbuss, in excellent preservation, about twelve muskets, the scabbard of a sword, and other articles. The loch is situated in the high mountains above Loch Ness. There has been a tradition among the people of the district for many years that a quantity of arms was thrown into the lake at the stormy period of the rebellion in 1745, which seems to be confirmed by this occurrence. As the drainage proceeds it is probable that other discoveries of the same kind will be made, in accordance with the popular belief of the peasantry. In the immediate neighbourhood of the spot is the house of Gortuleg, which, in 1745, was the property of Mr. Fraser, chamberlain and agent of Lord Lovat. Old Lovat himself resided at Gortuleg at this interesting time, and hence we may suppose took place this accumulation of firearms, which were afterwards thrown into the loch, when the battle of Culloden had decided the fate of the Jacobites. It is well known that after his defeat Prince Charles retreated through Straithnairn, a district possessed by the clan Mackintosh, of whom their leader, and every individual of rank, had fallen in the action, and came towards evening to the house of Fraser, of Gortuleg. Lovat had prepared a sumptuous feast, in anticipation of victory. The house was crowded with the retainers of Charles Edward and Lovat; and, connected with this, Mr. Fraser used to relate a touching and striking anecdote. The children of the family were, for convenience [sic], placed in a small room betwee-

family were, for convenience [sic], placed in a small room between the prince's chamber and another, but which had communication with both. The whispers of the children, afraid to speak out, produced a suspicion in the mind of Charles that he had been betrayed, and he exclaimed with agitation, 'Open the door, open the door." One of the boys having complied with his request, the unfortunate prince presented a countenance so strongly marked with terror that its features were indelibly impressed on the minds of his juvenile beholders. One of them described, in vivid terms, the fair oval face and blue eyes, distended with fear and agitation, of the tall, handsome young wanderer. Seeing his mistake, Charles gave way to the following pathetic exclamation, "How hard is my fate, when the innocent prattle of children can alarm me so much!" words which long dwelt in their memories, and often moved the household to tears. Charles was too touch agitated to think of rest. He changed his dress, and, taking a glass of wine, left the house at ten o'clock at right for Invergarry, the seat of Macdonell of Glengarry. *Inverness Courier*." (*Australasian Chronicle* (Sydney, NSW), 7 October 1841, p. 2; *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (NSW), 9 November 1841, p. 4)

"Great Floods at Inverness. Inverness, Thursday, January 25th.—This morning's light served but to unveil a calamity to the inhabitants of this town, which of its kind has no parallel in the wide range of tradition. Of the old or atone bridge there is not a single vestige remaining, and the new or wooden one has shown a disposition to follow in its track. The Ness rose, within the last day or two, to a height which the oldest inhabitant never saw it attain. At noon of yesterday it was fully three feet above the celebrated flood mark of 1829 overtopping the cut waters, and bearing, with irresistible impetus against the obtuse parts of the arch piers. From this period serious apprehensions began to be entertained of the venerable structure, which till now defied the floods or almost two centuries. .The quantity of water, however, began to augment, and continued to increase during the night. About midnight the river broke the restraint afforded by its banks, and began to invade all tenements along its course. The *Haugh* was fairly afloat before three o'clock; the people were obliged to betake themselves to their second or third floors, or, if the nature of their habitations or their fears cut off such an asylum, they wandered about house less, or re-

commended themselves to the sympathies of their more secure neighbours gave way, and between six and seven, ruin so extended itself as to indent the very embankments. People were aroused in their beds by their communicative friends; they started from their sleep into a transient day-dream, ere they could believe that what they heard was sober reality. Every one made for the scene of desolation as quickly as he could, so that the streets at a very early hour were traversed by crowds wearing very anxious and woe-begone faces. The river presented scene awful and grand in the extreme. The highway along the Haugh roads, Ness Walk, Bank-Street, Huntley-street, Douglas Row, Gilbert street, Tanner's Lane, King Street, and several other thoroughfares on the west side of the water, were laid under several feet of water. The Ness rolled remorselessly from bank to bourn. From the brow of the Castlehill, a view as obtained, which the beholder might dwell on with awe, mingled with regret. A great stream, naturally majestic, but placid, had, under sudden elemental influence, laid aside her character, and was raging with the fury of an unchained demon. Westward through the great Glen, approaching torrents marked an unsound state of flood; roads and all low grounds were covered, while north, ward to the sea was one boiling field of water[.] Looking downward, dreadful chasm, in which the interrupted waters contended with heaps of precipitated ruins, occupied the part where the Old Bridge stood. [...]" (*Adelaide Times*, 21 May 1849, p. 3) Notices to Correspondent. Novice (Beechworth). —:In our answer to your question in last week's *Journal*, there was one word wanting to make our answer scientifically correct. We said, "There is a very interesting fact connected with the temperature of water; as the, surface cools, the water so cooled becomès heavier and sinks; and thus even in fresh-water lakes of great depth; in cold countries, some are never known to become frozen because the whole body of water must be reduced" *nearly* "to the freezing point before ice will form on the surface." The word in italics was the word left out. Without it, the statement is not scientifically correct. The surface water cools, becomes heavier, and sinks, and this operation goes on till the temperature is lowered to about seven degrees above the freezing point, when the surface water ceases to descend, because whenever it reaches that temperature, water begins to expand, and therefore to be come lighter, and thus remains on the surface till upon being reduced to 32 degrees, or the freezing point, it begins to become ice. If water did not so expand before it became reduced to the freezing point, the whole body of water would ice at once. A lake in Scotland known as Loch Ness is never frozen, because

from its great depth its temperature is never reduced even to within seven degrees of the freezing point." (*The Victorian Farmers Journal and Gardeners Chronicle* (Melbourne, Vic.), 1 September 1860, p. 16)

"The Earthquake Wave / To the Editor of The Argus. Sir, – I wish to offer a few more remarks in reference to the earthquake wave, as some of your correspondents have seemingly misunderstood portions of my previous letter. It is idle to refer to the laws of storm waves, except to prove that, an earthquake wave is totally different. [...] That there may be vibrations in the earth sufficient to produce a movement in the ocean, or in lakes at an immense distance from the focus of eruption, was illustrated in the case of the great earthquake at Lisbon. The water in Loch Lomond was disturbed; the water in Loch Ness is recorded to have sunk sixteen feet, and remained at that level; whilst some of the lakes in Canada wore also influenced. [...]" (*The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.), 7 November 1868, p. 1)Finally, diving experiments: "Treasure Hopes / Fillip from Egypt Search / Big Prizes

'News' Special / London, Wednesday.

The success of the diving operations on the Egypt has persuaded recovery companies to consider other searches among the treasures that have lain at the bottom of the ocean in different parts of the world for many years owing to their inaccessibility.

The work or salvage on the sunken liner Egypt is being facilitated by the calm weather.

Already the divers have removed the deck plates and entered the captain's cabin, from which they arc bringing the safe.

They are also entering the dining-room and recovering the silver, and hope soon to reach the third deck, where the strong room is with gold ingots, estimated lo be worth £1,600,000.

New Diving Suit

The Egypt sank in 400 feet, but with a diving suit recently demonstrated by an inventor named Peress, it is hoped to be able to withstand a pressure at much greater depths. The feature of the new diving suit is the oil films which obviate friction at the joints caused by water.

Peress is already testing out his suit at Loch Ness, Scotland, in a depth of 610 feet, and hopes to be able to reach 1550ft.

Navarino Bay Hoard

The tests of the suit have been so promising that 11 will be used in an endeavor to recover the L20.000.000 sterling that has laid in Navarino Bay for 100 years, since 63 vessels of the Turkish fleet, laden with the looted treasures of Greece, were sunk by the allied fleet under Admiral Codrington.

The salvaging of L24,000,000 on board three Spanish galleons sunk in Vigo Bay, Northern Spain, in 1702, is also brought within the realm of possibility." (*Evening News* (Sydney, NSW), 4 September 1930, p. 1)

And also:

Sunken Liners. Recovery of Gold The Egypt Penetrated. *Examiner* (Launceston, Tas.), 5 September 1930, p. 7

Salvage of Sunken Treasure. *Advocate* (Burnie, Tas.), 5 September 1930, p. 1

Deep-Sea Diving Search For Sunken Treasure. Use Of New Diving Suit. *Kalgoorlie Miner* (WA), 5 September 1930, p. 5

Other Searches Projected. Tests with New Diving Suit. *The Telegraph* (Brisbane, Qld.), 5 September 1930, p. 4

Marine Monsters on Spanish Beaches

Javier Resines

Every little while, Spanish cryptozoology enthusiasts come across the news of the appearance of strange animals stranded on our beaches. When the remains found are in good condition, there is usually no doubt as to the identification of the species. The problem is complicated as the symptoms of decomposition begin to become visible and time and elements make a dent in the body of the poor being.

When much of the body mass disappears, its identification with the naked eye is difficult, it may seem that we are facing a true monster, a creature out of our worst nightmares - suddenly - has been present on the beach of our city.
But caution- The cases of the stranding of animals of considerable size are many, but the really unidentified specimens are reduced to a small percentage. Let's see an example. Between 2000 and 2015, a total of 235 cetacean findings were produced only in the Doñana Natural Park, a small coastal wetland located southwest of Spain.Of these, almost half corresponded to dolphins, followed by porpoises, whales, sperm whales and whales. Strands of species such as the Blainville zifio and the Cuvier zifio were also detected. These last two are especially significant because it is a little known species and possesses a particular anatomy that, when suffering the rigors of decomposition, can reveal suggestive morphologies similar to the

remains of legendary sea monsters.
But, of the 235 animals stranded in those years, 38 have not been identified. This circumstance does not mean that we are faced with new marine species unknown to Science, but that - simply and for whatever reasons - they have not been identified. Lack of means, of knowledge, of time, ... there are many reasons that are offered to us although - among them - there could be the one that really interests us: to find ourselves before a new creature for biology books.

Recently on our coasts we have had examples of strandings that have been effectively studied and have managed to determine which species they belong to ... along with others who continue to sow doubt as to whether, on this occasion, we are facing an unknown monster.

Strange animal on a beach in Islantilla, Huelva.

On March 7, 2019, a neighbor found the remains of what looked like a strange marine animal on the Islantilla beach in Huelva, possibly dragged to the shore as a result of the storm that affected the area in recent days. After the initial surprise, and unable to determine which species the body might belong to, the witness decided to photograph it and send the images to a nearby cultural institution, the House of Science of Seville.

This institution contacted ichthyologists and marine biologists of the CSIC (Higher Center for Scientific Research, an official scientific body) who could not identify which animal it was. They only managed to certify that the remains belonged to a vertebrate, with a tail and cartilage in the area that seems to be its head

Due to the state of decomposition in which the remains were found, they were removed from the beach by a crane belonging to the

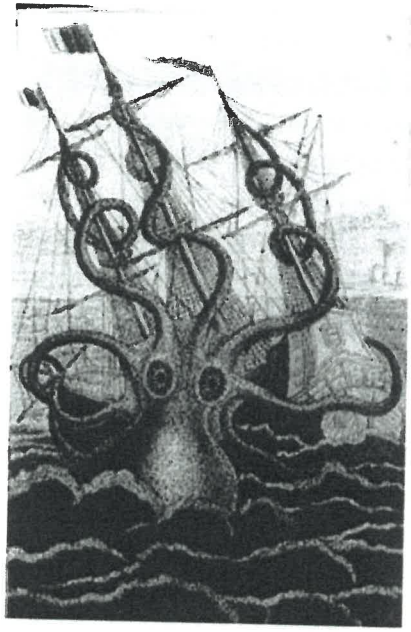


Fig 1 "Kraken" de Perre Denys de Monfort (1801)

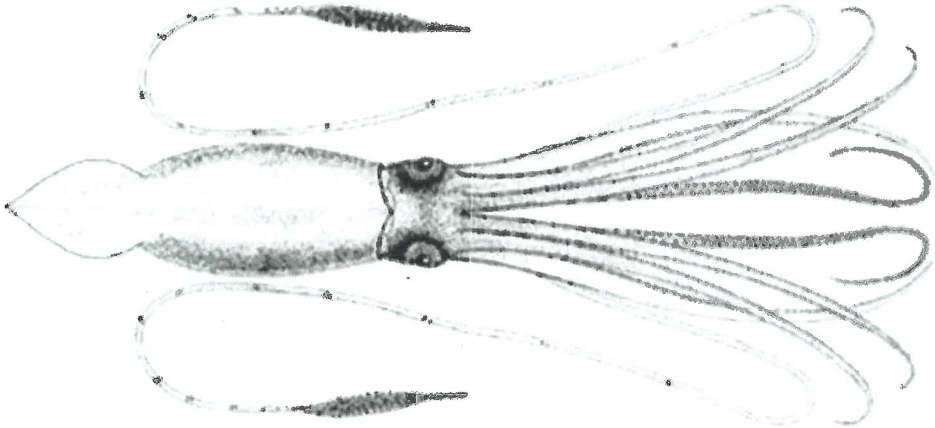


Fig 2. Arquiteuthis dux

Fig 3 Taningia danae

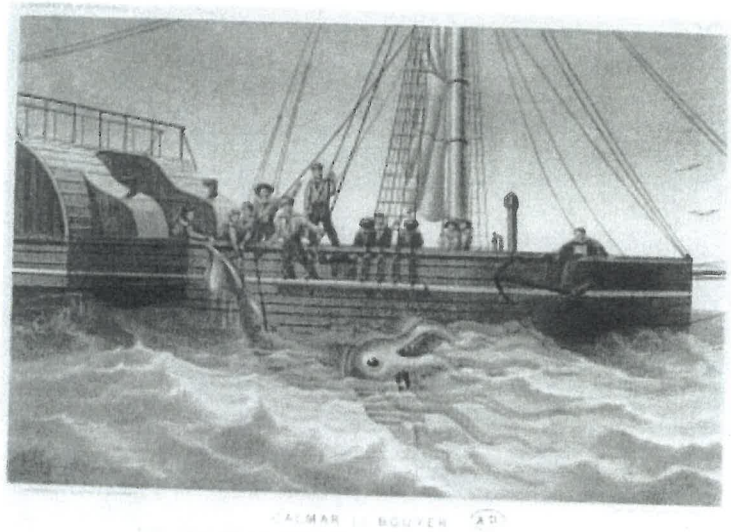


Fig 4 Calamar fighting with the Alecton, the work of E. Rodolphe

Maintenance Service of the Commonwealth of Islantilla, before a sample of the tissues could be taken for later analysis.Three or four days later, the House of Science contacted the Commonwealth of Islantilla to find out where the body was buried. They were aware that they had lost a great opportunity to solve the mystery.

Thus, researchers from the Institute of Marine Sciences of Andalusia (ICMAN) moved to the site to take DNA samples of this unique creature. Samples that were sent quickly to the University of Vigo, where Rafael Bañón works, one of the world's leading experts in the identification of marine species.He asked to have six samples of the body sent to him to practice a DNA test. Together with their usual team, they discovered that they were facing the remains of a basking shark, a species that lives in winter in the Gulf of Cádiz and - in spring - begin their migration

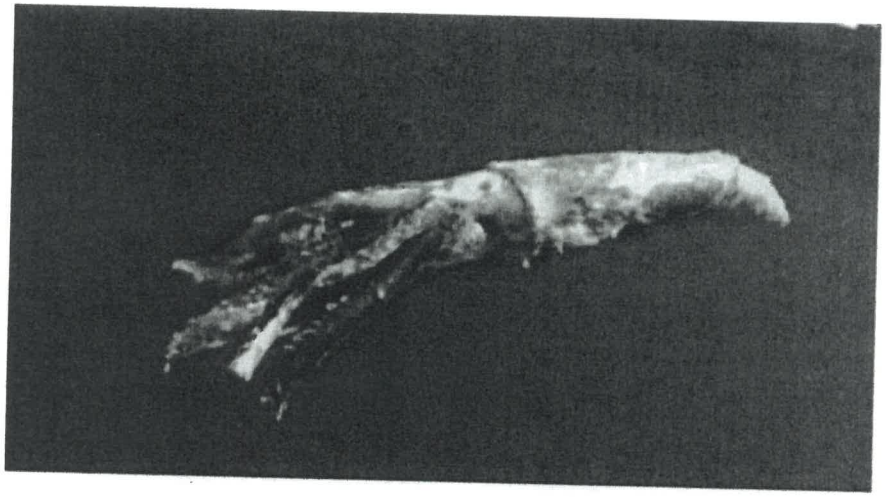


Fig 5 Dux found in Tenerife, August 2011

to northern Europe in search of the plankton banks..."For us, performing a DNA test of this type is routine, but we were very excited to be able to participate in this work, because we helped solve a mystery," said biologist Ángel Comesaña, an expert who also participated in the study.

In this case, the mystery was solved thanks to having preserved the remains of the animal for later analysis, a practice that should be basic in cases of stranding of potential strange creatures but that does not always happen. On this occasion, the monster was not such a monster. But it's not always so clear ...

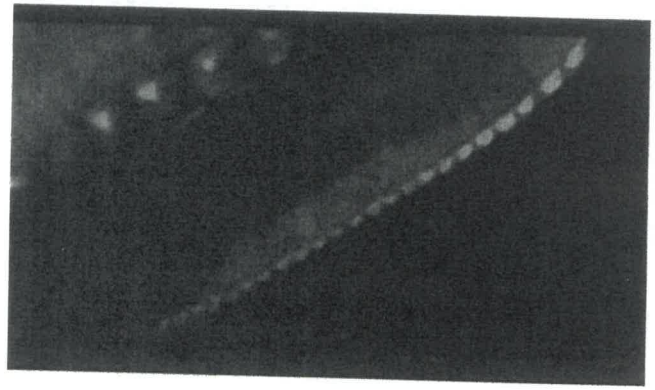


Fig 6 The squid recorded in the Canary Islands in 2017

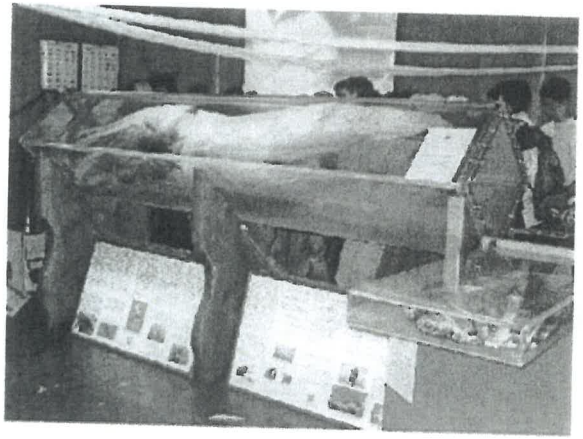
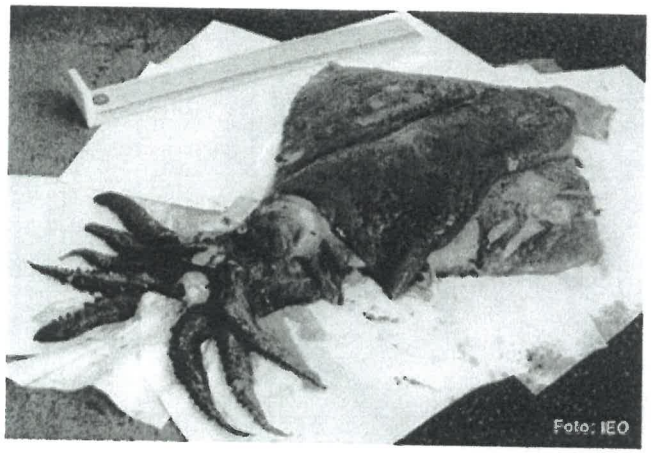


Fig 7 Luarca Museum Giant Squid

A similar case in Villarico, Almería In mid-August 2013, the beach of Villarico (Almería), also on the Andalusian coast, witnessed a similar event. An unusual animal of more than four meters in length was found on the shore, also in an advanced state of decomposition

Fig 8 Dux found in Algeciras, October 2012

Fig 9 Taningia found in Galicia, February 2013



The creature caused the astonishment of all the bathers gathered there who notified the emergency service. Civil Protection volunteers extracted the remains of the creature that were entangled in a rope or something similar from the water. They cordoned off the area and requested the participation of the Nature Protection Service (Seprona) and the Marine Wildlife Defense Association (Promar) of the neighboring municipality of Pulpi

"In summer we were watching the beaches; a lady found a part and we already helped take out the rest. We have no idea what it can be; smell, it smelled bad, because it was very broken. Promar experts are seeing what it could be, "explained the Civil Protection coordinator of the area.

Indeed, from Promar they indicated that - due to the important state of decomposition of the marine animal - it had been impossible to identify it, so a photographic series had been sent to experts belonging to other entities associated with the stranding network that could determine which species it belonged to .Although it seemed to rule out that it could be some type of mammal and it would be a fish, it would not be possible to determine it at that moment with DNA tests, because no entity had been responsible for the expenses that this analysis would entail.

Therefore, the remains of the animal had been buried - paying attention to health reasons - after being studied by Seprona and Promar. This last association, rejected the possibility of conserving the remains for study because it was not presumably a mammal, its main research area …

A pity that the lack of interest and budget deprives us of an interesting study about something we will never be sure of what it was… A rowing fish? A basking shark, as in the case of Islantilla? An unknown animal? That said: we will never know ...

An unknown animal in Ibiza.

In Spain there are dozens of cases similar to that of Villarico in which the stranded animal was never analyzed and, therefore, never let itself

Fig 10. Dux found in Bars in 2016

know if we were facing a new species.An example of this is the case known as the "monster of Ibiza", an event studied by the Spanish team of researchers of Mystery Unknown. On March 14, 2014, a group of amateur fishermen found the remains of an animal - in an advanced state of rotting away - in an area of rocks located on a beach especially appreciated for its tourist interest, located in the town of Sant Antoni, in the island of Ibiza.Apparently, we are facing some serpentiform remains, basically formed by fat and skin debris, attached to a spine, which prevents identifying the animal in question. The appearance is that of a true sea monster but, in the absence of evidence, we can only speculate with this possibility.

Because, as I warned at the beginning of the article, we can only be prudent. Surely, all (or almost all) the remains found belong to known species. It is in that "almost" where we house the small (by chance) but great illusion of discovering that - for once - the news of a stranger of a strange creature will not go into oblivion.

Kangaroos in the United States Part Two

Continued from Flying Snake Volume 3 Issue 8

December 2014

Richard Muirhead

Kenosha News

May 2nd 1978

It must be Spring

Although you`d never know it from the weather, it must be spring. There`s one sure sign. That`s the reports, over the past few weeks, about kangaroos being reported in the Waukesha (Wisconsin-Richard) area.

Loch Ness may have its monster, but Waukesha County has its kangaroos. Writing in the Waukesha Freeman newspaper, John Schroeder says that kangaroos are not the only exotic animals reported there. There have been reports of black bear, bobcats and beavers in the county. Schroeder says that there are coyotes in Waukesha County. Kangaroos have been sighted by almost everyone. And Sheriff Edward J.O`Conner is becoming a little bit tired of all the reports. (We will not say here, as we are tempted to do, that the sheriff should hop to it.) People who never knew that Waukesha County existed, have heard of it through national news reports about the kangaroo sightings. All that remains now is for some enterprising group in Waukesha to take advantage of these elusive kangaroos and turn it into a tourist attraction.

There could be kangaroo safaris with guides in pith helmets. And t-

shirts with the kangaroo on it. Why, there are lots of possibilities. Come on, Waukesha County,fame is just a hop, skip and jump away.

May 25th 1978

Kangaroo sighting claimed

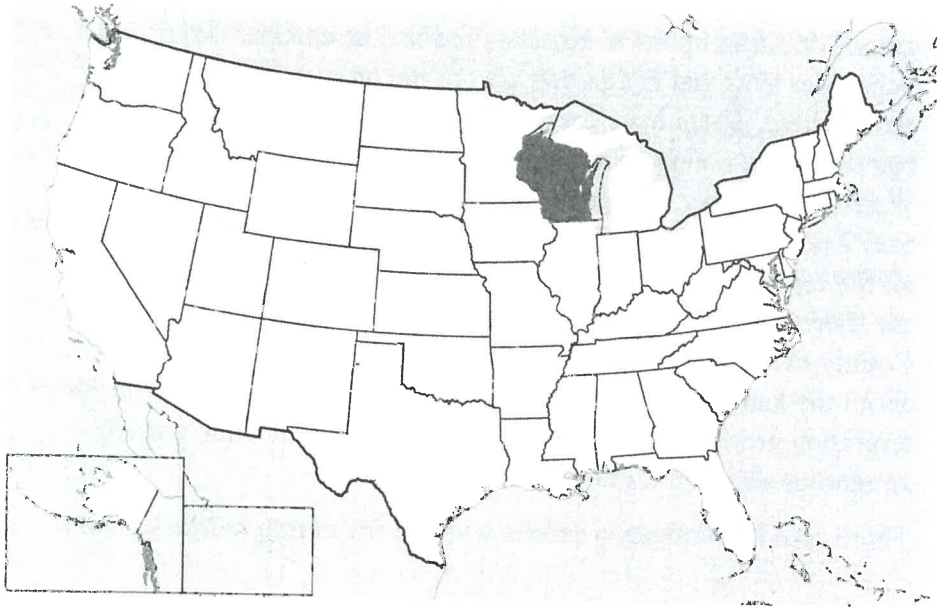
Eau Claire Leader-Telegram

A kangaroo in Eau Claire County?

That`s what an Eau Claire woman said she saw Sunday night on Highway 12 between Augusta and Fall Creek on her way home. The woman asked not to be identified.

The woman, who contacted the Leader-Telegram Wednesday, said she saw a figure the size of a man hopping across the highway five to six car lengths in front of her. "It wasn`t too visible," she said, but "it was not a deer, it wasn`t a dog and it wasn`t a man."

Map showing location of Wisconsin Wikipedia Commons



At first, she only told family members about it, because she didn`t think the story would be believed. When she learned that southeastern Wisconsin residents had reported similar sightings, she decided to contact the Leader-Telegram.

A Department of Natural Resources conservation warden said there have been no similar reports in the Eau Claire area.

Undated and Un-named newspaper

Hip Guide to Hoppity Hoopla

Forget about the killer bees from South America and the apocryphal crocodiles creeping through New York`City`s sewers. As for the Abominable Snowman,Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster: All of you pack up and get out of here. We`ve got a new animal mystery ,involving things that go hop in the night.

Waukesha County`s current kangaroo fever is just the latest manifestation of a mysterious marsupial migration through the Mid-west. Careful research through old newspaper clippings paints a somewhat portentous pattern:

Oct 19,1974: Two Chicago police officers failed in an attempt to handcuff a 4 1/2 foot kangaroo, which kicked them in the shins and escaped. The kangaroo was seen for several days on the city`s Northwest Side.

Nov 3rd,1974: A police officer in Plano,Ill., 40 miles southwest of Chicago, saw a kangaroo hop across a road in front of him. Local

folks christened the beast Kinky. Two days later Kinky was seen in some nearby woods, hanging around with three deer

Nov 13,1974: A kangaroo was seen window shopping on a street in Rensselaer, Ind.

July 15, 1975: Several motorists reported an unidentified hopping kangaroo along a highway near Dolton, a southern suburb of Chicago.

And now, despite numerous sightings and subsequent searches, would-be kangaroo captors in Waukesha County have failed to get the jump on anything Australian...Ayres ,55,is a Milwaukee resident who said he is a self-taught expert on Down Under. Ask him about kangaroos and in a scholarly fashion he will talk off your tail...Ayres has produced a whimsical, illustrated "Master Plan" dedicated to making the alleged Waukesha kangaroos a tourist attraction. Kangaroos would make an ideal theme for a spring festival, he said. "They represent the free spirit. They`re offbeat characters, kind of like I am," he said. Put that in your pouch and smoke it.

Red kangaroo grazing. Wikipedia Commons

Black Squirrels in Britain the earliest reports

Bob Skinner

York Herald - Saturday 07 February 1852 Page 6

YORKSHIRE NATURALISTS' CLUB.

The annual meeting of this club was held on Wednesday evening last, having been adjourned from January 15. E. CHARLESWORTH, Esq., occupied the chair.

The Secretary's report for 1851 having been read and adopted, the President, Professor Phillips, was [illegible] and the [illegible]

Mr. GRAHAM exhibited a splendid specimen of the true wild cat, or British tiger (*Felis catus*), from Sutherlandshire. This species is now, thanks to the gamekeepers, nearly exterminated. He also showed a black squirrel (*Sciurus niger Lin.*). This animal he received from Mr. Jones, of Bridlington Quay. It was brought to him in the flesh, and was said to have been shot, by the person who brought it, in the Hunmanby Woods. It is a North American species, and had probably made its escape from confinement.

Mr. WRIGHT stated that some years ago a black squirrel was shot by Lord Wenlock's keeper, at Kexby; probably a variety of the common squirrel.

All newspaper extracts © British Newspaper Archive

Bob Skinner writes: A number of recent issues of the CFZ Newsletter have featured a challenge laid down by Richard Muirhead: *"When was the first time a black squirrel was seen in Britain?"* . Today I have found 2 answers to this question.

According to the first source, "the first" black squirrel to be seen in the wild was one sighted at Woburn, Beds. in 1912. This fact was mentioned today on Radio 4 as part of a piece discussing research on the genetics of black squirrels, and was mentioned earlier this month at the end of an article on the same research in the Woburn local newspaper. See :

https://www.watfordobserver.co.uk/news/national/17833256.black-squirrels-caused-greys-interbreeding/.

The first report? I doubted it... so, I did a bit of digging and went on to find an earlier report of a black squirrel, seen near Watford in 1864. This report appears in a letter published in the Zoologist of 1865 Vol 23 p. 9431:

"Black Specimen of the Common Squirrel. — On the 18th of last October, while shooting near Watford, I distinctly saw a black squirrel, but, not knowing they were not often seen in England, I did not shoot it. I have frequently seen, near here, squirrels with fur as dark as that of the sable on their tails, and their whole body very dark.— M. R. Pryor ;

I am not convinced that this is the will be the first sighting of a black squirrel (which probably goes back into pre-history), but may be the earliest record of a sighting (to be found so far). Best regards
Bob As a PS to my previous letter, I attach excerpts from a 1852 cutting from the York Herald that speaks of 2 cases of black squirrels killed in that county. I have collected together a number of newspaper cuttings on 19th Century Black squirrels in the UK , with some references to them being kept as pets. In 1930s a number of black

A black squirrel by Sujit Kumar Wikipedia Commons

squirrels were deliberately released by Duke of Bedford on his property in Bedfordshire in an attempt to control the large grey squirrel population.

Dover Telegraph and
Cinque Ports General Advertiser
29 August 1835 Page 8

Several subjects of Natural Curiosity, were accidentally viewed by numbers of the visiters and inhabitants, on Thursday, by the arrival of a foreign vessel, for water and stores, bound to Hamburg from Tampico. On board were a living alligator, about six feet long; a wild boar, several beautifully plumed parrots, and a pair of handsome Indian deer. One of the latter, a delicately spotted doe, unfortunately died soon after the vessel entered the harbour. A black squirrel, also on board, has been procured by a gentleman in Dover.

Falkirk Herald - Saturday 31 March 1866

A BLACK SQUIRREL.—A few days ago a jet black squirrel was captured in the woods of Lennoch, half-way between Comrie and Crieff. The animal is considerably larger than the common brown squirrel, which is so abundant in the plantations of Perthshire, and is believed to be the first of its kind that has yet been seen in this district.—*Scotsman.*

Stroud Journal - Saturday 20 August 1870 Page 1

FOR SALE, a Black Squirrel, several flying Squirrels, from North America (very rare), an Agoutis, Brazilian Parrot, and two American Mocking Birds.—Apply to Mr. Butler, care of Mr. Thomas Knee, John-street, Stroud.

Durham County Advertiser 4 December 1896 Page 6

A grey squirrel has been caught in Stanhope Dene. A black squirrel has been seen in Hare-Up Gill Wood, Frosterley.

Southern Reporter
24 September 1903 Page 3

DENHOLM.

A BLACK squirrel has been seen in a wood close to Minto Home Farm.

Field - Saturday 24 April 1909 Page 59

A BLACK SQUIRREL IN BUCKS.—On the 15th inst. an entirely black squirrel crossed the main Latimer road just before me and entered Lord Chesham's Park, climbing a tree at once. I conclude it to be a case of melanism.—E. BURTON DURHAM (Chesham Bois, Bucks).

Buckingham Advertiser and Free Press 2 May 1931 Page 6

A BLACK SQUIRREL.

Sir Everard P. Duncombe said his property was next door to that of the Duke of Bedford, to whom a previous speaker had attributed the introduction of the grey squirrel into this country. His (the speaker's) property suffered enormously from the grey squirrel. He understood that the Duke of Bedford had now introduced the black squirrel. Whether that would kill the grey squirrel he did not know. (Laughter.)

Lord Chesham said he believed it had been established that what was known as the grey squirrel was not a squirrel at all, but a species of rat. He thought, therefore, that any legislation relating to rats should apply also to the grey squirrel.

The Chairman (Mr. Paine), said at present the Committee had no legal powers to grant assistance in the matter. He asked the Press to ventilate the hope that everyone would kill as many grey squirrels as they possibly could.

The resolution urging the necessity for legislation was moved by Mr. West, seconded by Lieut.-Col. Chalinor, and carried unanimously.

Northern Whig 21 January 1938 Page

"Two black squirrels are reported by a resident. Are they usual? "—L. M. C. Rostrevor.

[Most unusual, and if actual they may be counted as melanistic examples. Irish mammals tend to melanism, due to the mild, damp climate, and it is possible for it to be shown in excess, just as it is possible for occasional albinos (the opposite condition) to appear.—Ed.]

Northern Whig 3 February 1938 Page 13

NATURE NOTES.

SQUIRRELS AT ROSTREVOR.

A writer in "Nature Notes" stated that he had visited Rostrevor in the hope of seeing the black squirrel. I do not know if he was successful in his quest.

Almost four years ago while on a visit to Rostrevor I saw two squirrels in the woods there. One of them was grey; the other was black with a white spot. They were within view for a very short time, but sufficiently long for me to note the colours.—J. K. (Belfast).

We thank J. K. for the compliment expressed at the end of his note, but not published.—Ed.

Liverpool Echo
13 December 1951 Page 4

Wirral's Squirrels

Schoolchildren in the Barnston area of Wirral have been fascinated recently by a couple of black squirrels which they have seen visiting The Dales. Although known to naturalists from other parts of the country, black squirrels (usually black or dark grey varieties of the grey squirrel) are rare in Cheshire. The common squirrels of the Wirral woods are the native red species, although an occasional grey alien wanders from the Delamere Forest where that kind haunt several woods. There is record of an earlier black squirrel in Wirral pre-war, and many years ago a white one, an albino, was found in Bidston woods.—"Postman," in the *Daily Post*.

Luton News and Bedfordshire Chronicle
19 March 1953 Page 8

Pleasant Little Squirrels

TAKE a child into the woods for an afternoon walk, and if you see a squirrel that will be the highlight of the afternoon.

There he sits on a branch with his tail curled up behind him while he nibbles contentedly at some woodland delicacy and keeps a weather eye on those human intruders.

Make a sudden move and he is gone, flashing away along the branches, jumping through mid-air to the next tree and you lose sight of him. A pleasant little fellow, just like the picture in the children's picture books, only grey, not red.

Really, though, he's a nasty, destructive little piece of vermin, so much so that the Forestry Commission has put a price on his tail. A bob for every one killed.

The grey squirrel does hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of damage stripping bark from hardwood trees. A severe stripping kills the tree but in any case it destroys the tree's value as timber.

Once there was a species called the red squirrel. He was not nearly such a pest but he has almost disappeared from this country leaving the grey squirrel master of the woodlands.

AN earlier Duke of Bedford is credited, or rather debited, with having introduced the grey squirrel into this country by releasing some he had imported in the Woburn woods.

Probably that is an unfair accusation for there is no evidence to support it and the Dukes of Bedford have always been pretty knowledgeable about birds and beasts.

Even so it is known that about 400 were brought into this country and released about 60 years ago in the Home Counties, Devon, Cheshire and Yorkshire. Since then they have multiplied out of all knowledge and become a major pest.

Now, however, not only is the Forestry Commission offering a bob a tail but the Duke of Bedford is organising a little private war of his own against the pest his forbears have been accused of introducing.

He has now released a species of black squirrel into the Woburn woods and the blacks are mortal enemies of the greys. You can see them fighting in the trees. The air resounds with squawking, and the country dogs are picking up dead greys and bringing them in.

So far the casualties have been greys and bringing them in.

So far the casualties have been all on the side of the greys. There are no dead blacks about.

So the villagers of Mid-Beds will be earning a few welcome extra bobs and the Duke will be salving the conscience of his family, though it is to be hoped that if the blacks oust the greys as the greys once ousted the reds, the blacks will not in turn become an even greater pest.

Survival of the Passenger Pigeon beyond its official extinction date

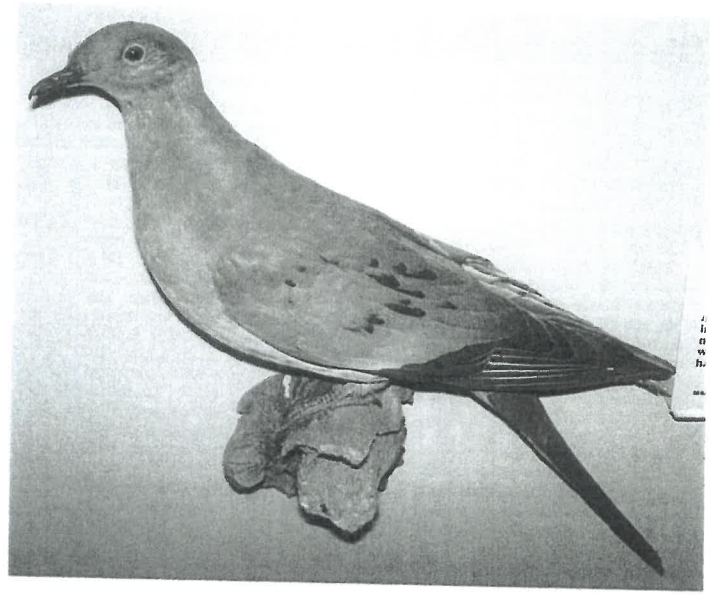
Richard Muirhead

I became interested in this subject after Robert Twombley sent me an account (see below) on the survival of the Passenger pigeon several years after its supposed extinction date, which Wikipedia has as follows:

"The last recorded nest and egg in the wild were collected in 1895 near Minneapolis. The last wild individual in Louisiana was discovered among a flock of mourning doves in 1896, and subsequently shot. Many late sightings are thought to be false or due to confusion with mourning doves. The last fully authenticated record of a wild passenger pigeon was near Oakford, Illinois, on March 12, 1901, when a male bird was killed, stuffed, and placed in Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois, where it remains today. This was not discovered until 2014, when writer Joel Greenberg found out the date of the bird's shooting while doing research for his book *A Feathered River Across the Sky*. Greenberg also pointed out a record of a male shot near Laurel, Indiana, on April 3, 1902, that was stuffed but later destroyed...For many years, the last confirmed wild passenger pigeon was thought to have been shot near Sargents, Pike County, Ohio, on March 24, 1900, when a female bird was killed by a boy named Press Clay Southworth with a BB gun...The boy had not recognized the bird as a passenger pigeon, but his parents identified it, and sent it to a taxidermist. The specimen, nicknamed "Buttons" due to the buttons used instead of glass eyes, was donated to the Ohio Historical Society by the family in 1915. The reliability of accounts after the Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana birds are in question. U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt claimed to have seen a bird in Michigan in 1907.Ornithologist Alexander Wetmore claimed that he saw a pair flying near Independence, Kansas, in April 1905... In 1910, the American Ornithologists' Union offered a reward of $3,000 for discovering a nest – the equivalent of $76,990 in 2015 (1)

The information from Robert Twombley is from the journal California Fish and Game volume 3-5 (1917-1919) p.86 under the headline Passenger Pigeons Reported in Eastern States and it includes the following :

"Apparently the death on September 1st 1914 of Martha, a twenty-nine year old passenger pigeon kept in captivity in the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens marked the extinction of the passenger pigeon...During 1918 however, several persons reported seeing passenger pigeons. Baymen and Oystermen of Great South Bay insist that a few pigeons still migrate along the southern shore of Long Island , New York...The latest report is from John M.Crampton, 61 years of age and Superintendent of the Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game. He describes having seen three passenger pigeons in the middle of May, 1918 while fishing at Graniss…" Pond,Southington,Connecticut…(2)



Stuffed male Passenger Pigeon Field Museum of Natural History . Wikipedia Commons.

According to the ShukerNature blog of March 8th 2017 `Posthumous Sightings of Passenger Pigeons?`."..In September 1929, however, a remarkable report emerged that could not be discarded so readily. This was the month in which Michigan University bacteriologist Prof. Philip Hadley, in the company of a Mr Foard, an old friend familiar with the land, had been hunting in a virtually uninhabited wilderness nestling within Michigan's northern peninsula. " (3) Later in this blog Karl states:

"Surely, then, the 'passenger pigeon' spied in March 1965 at Homer, Michigan, by Irene Llewellyn *(Fate,* September 1965) and another spied the same year by Stella Fenell at New Jersey's Park Ridge *(Fate,* January 1966), not to mention an intriguing series of recently-claimed passenger pigeon sightings chronicled online in 2014, 2015, and 2016 by the website HoricanBirds.com, were only mourning doves ... weren't they? " (4)

There was a claim in the Milwaukee Journal of March 5th 1939 (see the following page) that a passenger pigeon was seen by a woman in 1932.

It is worth remembering that the Passenger pigeon once existed in its millions upon millions and the collected sound of its wings was so loud as to make audible conversation almost impossible. According to the Rev J.G.Wood`s ` The Illustrated Natural History` (1873) page 576:
" Among the most extraordinary of birds, the PASSENGER PIGEON may take very high rank, not on account of its size or beauty, but on account of the extraordinary multitudes in which it sometimes migrates from one place to another. The scenes which take place during these migrations are so strange, so wonderful, and so entirely unlike any events on this side of the Atlantic, (i.e. Britain-Richard) that they could not be believed but for the trustworthy testimony by which they ,

© Geneaology Bank
Milwaukee Journal March 5th 1939

Passenger Pigeon Seen in 1932, Woman Insists

Story in Periodical Revives Controversy; Bird Cited Fed at Web Lake (Wis.) Cottage

One of the great wild life mysteries, the disappearance of the passenger pigeon, has been revived by publication of MacKinlay Kantor's "The Sound of Their Wings," in the Saturday Evening Post, and among hundreds of letters sent the magazine is one from an Iowa woman, Mrs. Fred H. Shaver, who is satisfied in her own mind she saw Wisconsin's last passenger pigeon in Burnett county in 1932.

Her story of the bird she saw from the window of the Shaver summer home on Web lake, where the Shavers spend five or six months each year, has been told for The Journal in its entirety by Mrs. Shaver. Scientists deny the bird was seen in Wisconsin after 1871, although hunters insist they saw them and killed them in flocks as late as 1895.

Sketched Bird From Life

The Shaver cabin stands a half mile back from a main road. Summer and winter the Shaver cabin is one of the isolated spots on Web lake. The Shavers have been summer visitors there since 1919, going each year from their home in Cedar Rapids. Their hobby is bird study.

At 6 o'clock in the morning of May 24, 1932, Mrs. Shaver writes, her husband noticed a bird approaching their cabin. At first he took it to be a partridge but it came into plain view and he saw he was in error. Mrs. Shaver writes of this incident:

"It was on the ground. We stood before a large uncurtained window, five feet wide and four feet high, with our maid, Helen. We had an unobstructed view as the bird came directly toward us, feeding. It came within 10 feet of us. I reached for my notebook and on the edge of a page made a hasty sketch. I have this page beside me as I write."

Rose Colored Legs

She then describes the bird's coloring and shape as it appeared that morning. This description tallies with the passenger pigeon, larger than the common wild doves, a long tail, rose colored legs and feet, grayish tan with dark spots on the back, etc. She says they watched it for five minutes when her husband moved and the bird, frightened, flew away—"flying as a dove and with a dove's call."

They later contacted various ornithologists asking for information on what kind of bird it might have been. One, W. C. Armstrong of Princeton, N. J., said it might have been a Pacific coast wild pigeon strayed from its usual course. People began to kid the Shavers about their "passenger pigeon." Finally, she says, she took the maid to the Coe college museum in Cedar Rapids where there is a bird exhibit. She told her to stand beside the bird they saw in the yard that morning in May. The maid, without knowing which bird was which, stood alongside a stuffed female passenger pigeon.

Mixed Bag

A new colored movie film made by the Milwaukee Casting club, showing how to tie flies, will be exhibited at the club's dinner at the Maryland hotel Monday at 7 p. m. . . . Wednesday at 8 p. m. in the City club, Scott Leavitt of the United States forest service and Sylvester Strothman of Boys' technical high school will address an open meeting on conservation, one of a series sponsored by the Milwaukee County League of Women Voters. Mar. 15. Dr. Frank Baker, president of Milwaukee Teachers' college, will be the speaker.

The North Wisconsin Rod and Gun club of Ashland has set its spring fisherman's roundup for Tuesday, Mar. 28 . . . "Postgraduate" courses for outstanding Wisconsin eagle scouts will continue this summer at Dorothy Dunn lake in Northern State forest. Haskell Noyes and Sam Snead of Milwaukee and Theodore Shearer of Fond du Lac are officers of a camp corporation which sponsors these sessions. Last summer 64 boys were in camp for two weeks and did work for which they were paid $1 a day by the conservation department.

-are corroborated…" Later Wood says: (page 580) - "One or two specimens of this bird have been taken in Europe,and one individual was shot in Fifeshire in 1825…"(5)According to The Gentleman`s Magazinezine Volume 16 July-December 1841 this sighting took place in December 1825. See the following page.

According to this web site as recently as November 2017 a living passenger pigeon was seen in Missourihttp://www.horiconbirds.com/sightings.html **Date of sighting:** November 2017

Location of sighting: Leslie, Missouri

Name of birdwatcher: Matthew

What about this bird leads you to believe it was a passenger pigeon and not a mourning dove or other species? It had the same idea of colors as an Eastern Bluebird but was too large to be one. This is the type of colors a male Passenger Pigeon would have. Mourning doves do not look like the males. Colors were wrong to be one. It was too large and had too much Bluebird-like colors to be a Bluejay. I don't think it was an American Kestrel because it looked too much like a Pigeon.

Description of sighting: I was riding home with my Grandma when on the power line was a bird that looked like a Passenger Pigeon. It was like no bird I have seen or in the bird book.

Was the bird in the company of other birds or animals? No

Do you have a photo of the sighting? No

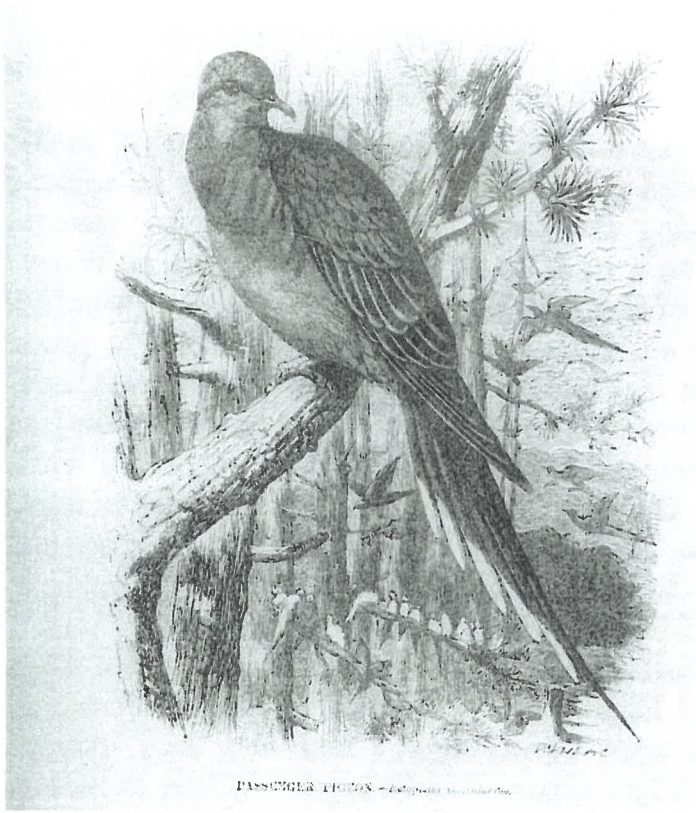
Elsewhere on this web site are reports of the passenger pigeon seen in New York City, Wisconsin and Virginia.

Fife Herald and Kinross,Strathearn and Clackmannan Advertiser

February 9th 1826

RARE BIRD.—On the last day of the year, as Mr Andrew Kay, second son of Mr Kay, farmer in the Hilton of Carslogie, was walking westward towards Fernie, he observed a bird perched on a wall, (near the Pigeon house at West Hall, the property of General Hope,) the outlandish appearance of which attracted his attention; after several efforts to procure a musket, he at last succeeded in securing his prize, and immediately conveyed it to the Rev. Alexander Espline, schoolmaster, Monimail, whose collection of preserved birds is well known in the neighbourhood, and never fails to excite a deep interest in the minds of those capable of contemplating with proper feelings the wonderfully diversified forms and beautiful colours of the feathered tribes. The bird was even more rare than the fortunate youth supposed. It was the Migratory or Passenger Pigeon of America, (*Columba migratoria of Wilson's American Ornithology,*) and the first example of the kind which has occurred in Europe. It was probably forced to our shores by stress of weather.—This species occurs in vast flocks on the Continent of America, from Canada to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and is very destructive to corn-fields.

© British Newspaper Archive



Passenger Pigeon. From Rev J.G.Wood The Illustrated Natural History—Birds p.577

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1. Wikipedia Commons https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passenger_pigeon
2. California Fish and Game vol 3-5 (1917—1919) p. 86
3. Shuker Nature March 8th 2017 4. Shuker Ibid 5. Rev J..G Wood The Illustrated Natural History (1873) p 576

letters and e-mails

Further to "Eels on cocaine" (Flying Snake # 15)

Richard George

Cocaine has recently been detected in shrimps in Suffolk (1). The potential for effect on the creatures is low, apparently. The South American caterpillar *Eloria noyesi* feeds on the leaves of coca plants. Examination of its dopamine receptors indicates it has evolved resistance to coca`s effects (2)

The best known "animals on coke" story has to be SQUIRRELS ON CRACK. This originated in the *South London Press* newspaper in October 2005. *The Guardian* took this up, tongue firmly in cheek, writing of Brixton squirrels with "Bloodshot eyes searching for their next fix" (3). This is, of course, zoologically inaccurate, as they have no whites to their eyes. This story, like the grey squirrel itself, originated in the US, in Internet mythology from New York and Washington D.C.

In the late Seventies, before leaving *terra cognita* completely, Skip Spence of Moby Grape owned a pet rat called Oswald he had trained to snort cocaine with him (4). He might have been amused by a thirty second film on You Tube, in which a white rat in a cage ingests coke, writhes and expires to the portentous commentary "Only one drug is so addictive nine out of ten lab rats will use it and use it and use it until they die…" This absurdity is courtesy of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (5).It also echoes a triptych of cautionary nineteenth century drawings of a guinea pig under the influence of absinthe. In the second of these it is agitated, and in the third flat on its back with its legs in the air…(6).

References

(1) bbc.co.uk/news/uk-England-Suffolk-48117678

(2) Newscientist.com/article/dn17373-animals-on-drugs-11-unlikely-highs

(3) https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/Oct/08/drugsandalcohol.patrickbartham

(4) https://www.loudersound.com/features/dark-star-the-tragic-genius-of-skip-spence

(5) YouTube.com/watch?v=7kS72J5N1m8

(6) Phil Baker, *The Book of Absinthe: A Cultural History* (2001),p.182

Horned Caimen in the Amazon

Colonel John Blashford-Snell passed on the following information about a cryptid in the Amazon, a horned caiman, on September 11th 2019. Dear Richard,

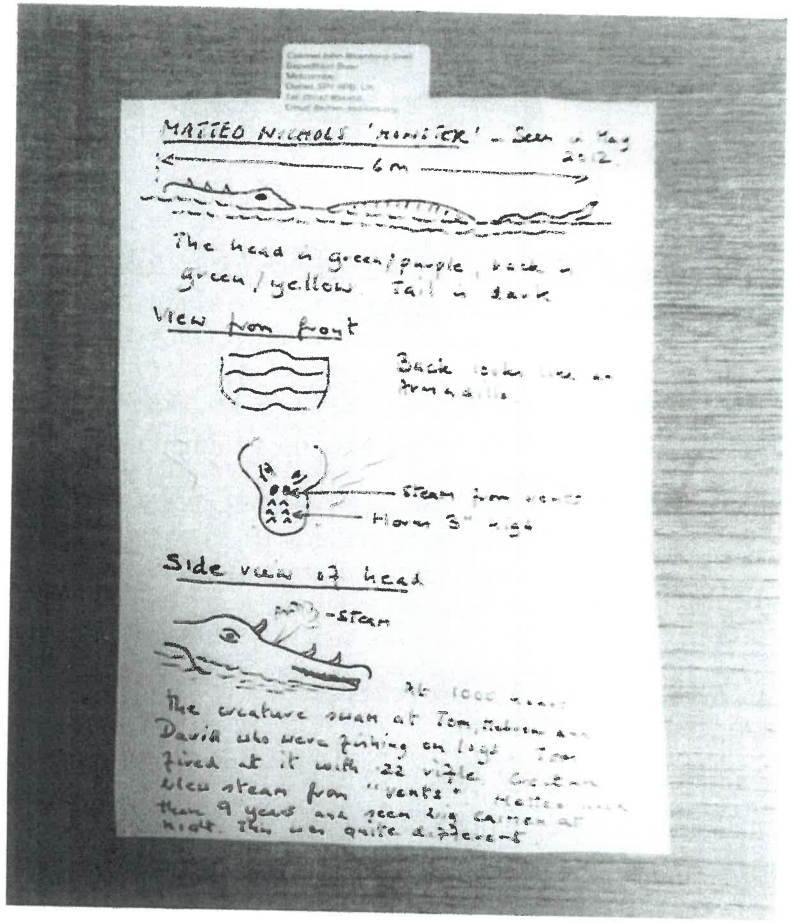
Thank you for your kind email.

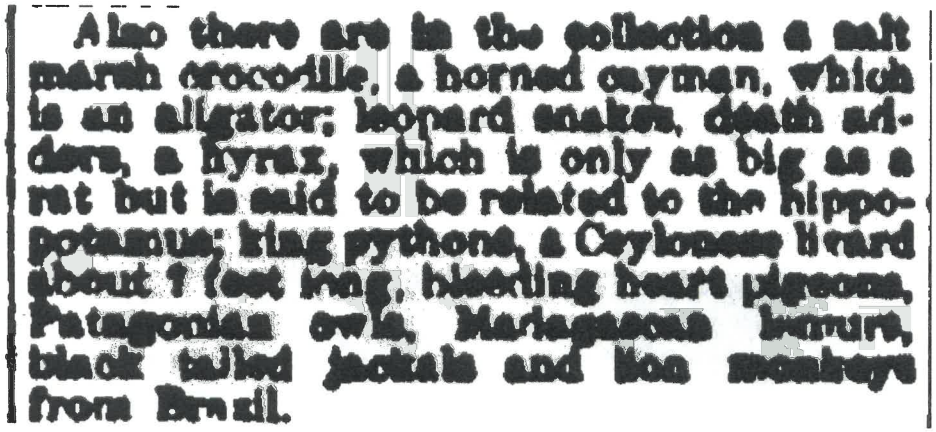
I should indeed like to see any information that you can find on horned caimen. I've attached a sketch that I made in 2012 when talking to an American homesteader who had sighted a strange caiman in Bolivian Amazonas.

There is said to be a pair of them in a remote lagoon and they have been seen by a number of people, most of whom I count as being reliable observers.

I've been in the area on several expeditions and have seen a great many caiman, mostly the black variety. Yours, John

The sketch here below that Colonel Blashford-Snell sent to me. I found a reference in The Sun and New York Press a New York newspaper of July 13th 1909 to a horned cayman in a collection of animals being sent to a zoo in the Bronx in that city. See page 60.





Also there are in the collection a salt marsh crocodile, a horned cayman, which is an alligator; leopard snakes, death adders, a hyrax, which is only as big as a rat but is said to be related to the hippopotamus; king pythons, a Ceylonese lizard about 7 feet long, bleeding heart pigeons, Patagonian owls, Madagascan lemurs, black tailed jackals and lion monkeys from Brazil.

The Sun and New York Press, New York July 13th 1909

I was sent these two web links from the Wildlife Conservation Society in New York on 23-9-19 . It seems horned caimen may not be so cryptid as I first suspected.

Dear Mr Muirhead,

Thanks for your email. I do see reference to a horned caiman in our 1909 Annual Report here:

https://archive.org/details/annualreportnewy141909newy/page/68

And then another here, in our Bulletin that year:

https://archive.org/details/zoologica303619081909newy/page/570

Neither notes the country of origin. It appears that they purchased the animal during a collecting trip to the UK and Europe. Hope that this is still of some interest, Madeleine

Orange creature in Hampstead

Richard George sent me this e-mail on September 6th 2019

I've just stumbled over a mystery from a few years back, the Golden Rat of Hampstead. Neil Arnold wrote a piece on Hampstead cryptozoology for *Animals and Men* 44, but I don't have a copy so don't know if he dealt with this case. In December 2004 a lady called Karen Stoker saw an animal in Kenwood Pond. She described it as bigger than a rat but smaller than a fox, and without a tail, but her most marked reaction was "My goodness, it's orange !" (https://woodandvale.

london24.net). Cue discussion in the local paper, the Ham and High. It was suggested, absurdly, that she had seen a Water Vole ("Bigger than a rat" ??)

There's actually quite a good match here - the Muskrat, *Ondatra zibethicus*. This would be the right size, and can look rufous. It also floats low in the water, which could have hidden its tail. The Muskrat was introduced to the UK for its fur, known as musquash, in the 1930s, but proved a pest and was officially exterminated by 1939 (L.M.Gosling, S.J.Baker, "The eradication of the Muskrat, *Ondatra zibethicus*. from Britain", *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, Volume 38, Issue 1, p.39-51 (1989)). But could a relict population have survived the cull ? Alternatively, could a Muskrat have stowed away from France, Belgium or the Netherlands, where they are still a pest species ? Then again, have London Zoo owned muskrats which could have escaped ?

With all good wishes,

Richard George

St.Albans, Herts

Garden Dormouse

Richard George

This is further to a letter I wrote to *Flying Snake* about Garden Dormouse, *Eliomys quernicus,* in the U.K. (Volume 2, Issue 6, November 2013). I`ve found out that the six specimens from Dover in 1991 lived in a cemetery, before falling prey to local cats. I assume this was a female which gave birth (litter size is 4 to 5). Zoologist Anthony J.Mitchell-Jones described this as "intriguing". He wrote that the Garden Dormouse " could well colonise England if given the opportunity", and even speculated it could already be native to Britain (1) Although the range of this species is contracting in Europe (2), it is still found in France up to the English Channel.

DEFRA`s non-native species secretariat entry for the Garden Dormouse makes for interesting reading (3). " There have been a number of reports...in England in recent years. Some animals may have survived for a month or more in the wild…" (4).Entry risk, according to DEFRA, is "Likely", and establishment of population risk "Moderately likely", although both these verdicts are qualified by "Low Confidence" in an adjacent table (I don`t understand this).

DEFRA describe an individual captured in north London and taken to a rescue centre (undated);one that escaped from a rescue centre in Leicester in 2002; and a stowaway in a car which evaded capture (undated, unplaced).

Sue Collard, a lecturer from Hove, found a Garden Dormouse in her car after motoring home from France. As it is an offence to release this species in the UK, she conscientiously drove it all the way back home (5). "David" provided photographic evidence of a Garden

Dormouse on a RSPB website, but failed to state whether it was in Britain or mainland Europe (6)

Eliomys quercinus is nocturnal, and there are fewer mammal-spotters than ornithologists, so some may have visited our shores unnoticed. And there are travel options a-plenty for these little Norman Conquerors—car, train, plane, ferry, Channel Tunnel...But if they do become naturalised here, how might that impact on our much loved native dormouse, *Avellanarius muscardinus?* The auguries are not good: remember the effect on the Red Squirrel of a larger, stronger competitor.

As I mentioned in my earlier letter, subfossil remains of *Eliomys quercinus* were discovered in York (7) .It was not just the Edible or Fat Dormouse, *glis glis,* that the Romans chowed down on. They factory-farmed dormice: presumably both species were imported. But both could have escaped and formed feral populations.

Quercinus derives from the Latin word for the oak tree, for which this dormouse has an affinity. Eliomys is from Greek meaning "sun-mouse" , which puzzles me, as the species is largely nocturnal. The taxonomic name of our Hazel Dormouse holds mystery also. *Avellanarius* derives from the hazel tree, *Corylus avellane,* but what about *muscardinus?* David Macdonald, when he was writing his *Collins Guide* in Oxford many moons ago, turned to a young classical scholar called Judith Mossman, who is mentioned in the Acknowledgements. The two of them point out that in Latin *musca* is "fly" and *avellere* " snatch." (8) This isn`t as bizarre as it sounds, as dormice do eat small insects. But snatching flies to eat? Or is *mus-cardinus* " reddish-brown mouse" , referring to its coat? Then again, is musc - from the Latin for musk, as nests of mice often smell of this(9) ? It`s all quite confusing.

REFERENCES

(1) Anthony J. Mitchell-Jones, " The status and distribution of mammals in Britain", Hystrix 8: 43-53 (1996).

(2) Sandro Bertolino , " Distribution and status of the declining Garden Dormouse, *Eliomys quercinus " Mammal Review* , Volume 47,Issue 2,p. 133-47 (2017).

(3) www.nonnativespecies.org

(4) RSS_RA_Eliomys_quercinus%20(4).pdf

(5) Itv.com/news/meridian/2015-06-23/woman-makes-700-mile-car-journey-with-stowaway-mouse

(6) community.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/f/identify-this/110627/do-you-know-this-nocturnal-mammal/841556#841556

(7) T.P.O`Connor, " The Garden Dormouse, *Eliomys quercinus* from Roman York" , Zoological Society of London *Journal* Volume 210, Issue 4, p.620-2 (1986)

(8) David Macdonald ,Priscilla Barrett, *The Collins Field Guide to the Mammals of Britain and Europe* (1993), p.8f., 277

(9) https: //zoom-ology.com/2017/09/29/the-hazel-dormouse-aka-the-sleepy-one

The location of end note 8 appears to be missing in the text so I have made an educated guess as to its location

E-mail from Shane Lea September 25th 2019 on various matters

Hi Richard,
I just received the latest issue of Flying Snake! A big Thank You, Thank You, for that! What an issue!
First of all, there is the iconoclast Shunka Warak'in photo, obliterating the crypto-critics contentions that there are only blurry photographs and no hard evidence in support of cryptids.
You penned a very fascinating article on Romans In The United States. As your special Devo-DEVOlved correspondent, dedicated to all things Devo, I am sending some information on possible Roman evidence from the United States and Brazil.
I thought the Quora comments were rather weak, as they either did not know of the material I am sending you, or they just wanted to ignore it. Chances are, they know all about it.
The evidence from Brazil would negate the argument that the Romans couldn't possibly travel that far south (i.e. to the U.S.A.).
Secondly, the Romans may well have sailed from Morrocco to the United States, instead of coming directly from Italy. That makes much more sense from a contact standpoint.
This is just some of the information that I have. Yes, I read much more than just biographies of rock stars. LOL. This information comes from the book America B.C., by Barry Fell. Some of it is hard to read if you don't have an Electron Microscope or the Hubble Telescope handy (lol), but, hey, we are doing what we can for all those spuds out there.
Hopelessly DEVOted To Devo,
Shane
P. S. The information is on it's way!

P.S. For copyright reasons I (Richard) am unable to reproduce the information here but put it this way-there is probably enough information in America B.C. to do a part 2 of `Romans in the U.S.A.`

Shane on Megalodon and Romans in the USA

E-mail dated September 26th 2019

Hello Again, Dr. Devo!
This is just a short, Fortean-follow-up from my last email.
In regards to the bite-marks left on the 65-foot pygmy blue whale, the bite-marks were left by serrated teeth, such as a shark would have.
The researchers estimated the bite-mark was from a 39-foot shark!
This is hard evidence of a shark almost double the size of a normal, great white shark and much closer to a megalodon size-range.
As far as the Roman coins or amphorae found on the coast of Massachusetts, Florida, or Brazil, or the Roman evidence from Arizona, this is HARD evidence of an anomaly that has not been satisfactorily explained by the skeptics. Skeptics always want hard evidence, well, HERE IT IS!
Now, what's your take on megalodon after checking out the evidence?
Until The Macclesfield Mansions Send Out The Next Batch Of Flying Snakes, Fare Thee Well, Dr. Devo!
Shane

NOTES & QUERIES

Boy with hundreds of teeth

The Guardian August 3rd 2019

Dental surgery reveals jaw-dropping 526 teeth in mouth of Indian boy

" A seven-year-old boy who had suffered occasional tooth ache was found to have 526 teeth inside his jaw, surgeons in India said yesterday. The hundreds of teeth were found in a sac nestled in the molar region of his lower jaw during surgery carried out at the Saveetha dental college and hospitals in Chennai. "The teeth were of variable sizes that ranged from smallest at 0.1mm to largest, 3mm. They had a small crown, enamel and a small root," said Pratibha Ramani, the head of the department of oral and maxillofacial pathology at the hospital…"We had to take a lot of counselling sessions with him for him to undergo surgery. We have a very good counselling team who have expertise in dealing with kids," said Ramani. The boy, who now has 21 teeth, was discharged after three days and is doing well.

Kangaroo and young sighted in Nottinghamshire

The Daily Mail`s web site on October 25th 2019 reported the sighting of a kangaroo and two joeys near the Nottinghamshire market town of Bulwell.

"An 'escaped kangaroo' has been spotted hopping around near a quiet market town.

The marsupial was captured on camera standing in long grass near Bullwell, Nottinghamshire, yesterday.

Police shared the snap on social media and said the mother may have two joeys with her. They have appealed for the public to help track down the trio." (1)

REFERENCE

1. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7613465/Escaped-kangaroo-two-joeys-spotted-hopping-near-English-market-town.html

British birds jigsaw mix- up

Richard George kindly sent me the following tragi-comic story from the Sunday Times of October 27th 2019:

Ornithologists squawk over errors in M&S birds jigsaw.

" It was supposed to be the perfect Christmas present for bird-watchers: a jigsaw puzzle decorated with pictures of Britain`s best-loved birds.

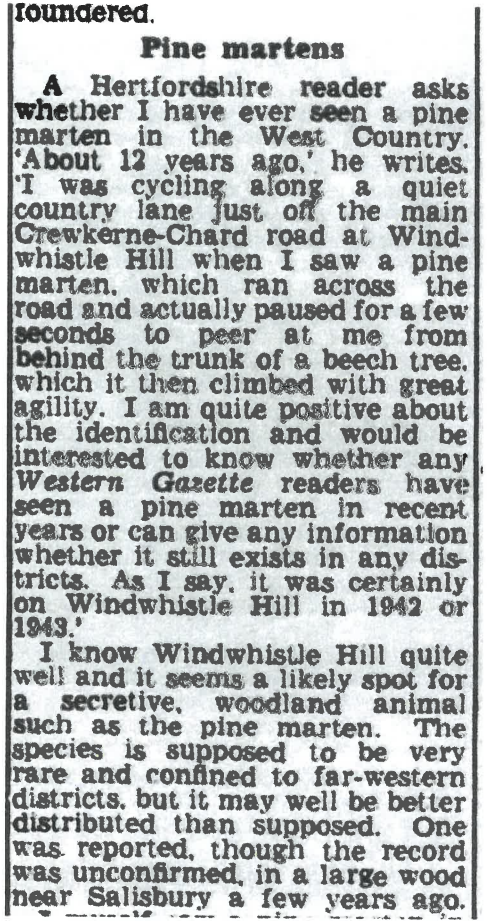
But Marks & Spencer`s 500 piece "British birds"offering has left experts in a flap after they noticed that almost a quarter of the species featured are not actually British. Among those...are an

the hummingbird, blue jay, piping plover, California quail and An Asian white-breasted waterhen, none of which is found in the UK. Others such as the rose-breasted grosbeak, hoopoe and glossy ibis have occasionally been spotted here, but are not native and could "scarcely" be considered British, one ornithologist said…"

California Quail— not British!

California quail ,adult male. Photographed in Point Reyes National Seashore, California,2007 by Yathin sk. Wikipedia Commons

Pine martens in Somerset and Wiltshire in the mid-20th Century



foundered.

Pine martens

A Hertfordshire reader asks whether I have ever seen a pine marten in the West Country. 'About 12 years ago,' he writes, 'I was cycling along a quiet country lane just off the main Crewkerne-Chard road at Windwhistle Hill when I saw a pine marten, which ran across the road and actually paused for a few seconds to peer at me from behind the trunk of a beech tree, which it then climbed with great agility. I am quite positive about the identification and would be interested to know whether any *Western Gazette* readers have seen a pine marten in recent years or can give any information whether it still exists in any districts. As I say, it was certainly on Windwhistle Hill in 1942 or 1943.'

I know Windwhistle Hill quite well and it seems a likely spot for a secretive, woodland animal such as the pine marten. The species is supposed to be very rare and confined to far-western districts, but it may well be better distributed than supposed. One was reported, though the record was unconfirmed, in a large wood near Salisbury a few years ago.

Yet more confirmation (if any were needed), that Jon Downes is correct in his book The Smaller Mystery Carnivores of the Westcountry that the pine marten was and possibly still is extanct in Somerset © British Newspaper Archive Somerset County Herald October 19th 1963

Irish wild cat—or what?

The Tatler and Bystander

December 24,1941

"...And as it is the time of year when ghost stories are allowed to come into their own, here is one told by a simple Irish policeman all about a queer animal (a leprechaun in disguise, very probably) who helped to arrange a decent burial.

My grandfather (says the policeman) ,whom I remember well, was the youngest of three brothers. When he was a child, there was a great scarcity of food, and people were dying everywhere of hunger and fever (the famine of 1848-49).One evening in spring, my grandfather was in bed, and his two brothers came into the house talking of a queer animal they had seen on a wall about half a mile away. It wasn`t like anything they had ever seen before, and they hadn`t liked the looks of it very much, but they were curious about it– and so was my grandfather, who wanted to see it too, and didn`t think it could hurt him when the other brothers were there. So the following night they all went out and came to a stone wall at the bottom of the long hill in the townland of Annagher— just the other side of Stuart Hall, as you know. Well now, when they got there, there it was! It was something like a wild cat, only bigger, with large, staring eyes, and it was walking up and down the top of the wall, and every now and then it would let out a screech that made my grandfather`s heart stand still!

All the same it didn`t want to injure any of them—they felt that-and every now and then it made to get off the wall and go up the meadow behind, and then it would look back at them and get on the wall again…"

Asian worms in Canada

From Who Discovered America? Gavin Menzies and Ian Hudson

Earthworms in the Americas

" After publication ,some of the most exciting moments come in the form of tangible supporting evidence. One such example was suggested to us by a reader who had been studying the presence of earthworms in the Americas in the 1980s. Hubert Timmenga e-mailed us after reading Who Discovered America? With details concerning species of earthworms that were discovered on Vancouver Island and along the coastal forests of British Columbia, Canada.

We know that, like the plants and animals studied in Emeritus Professors Sorenson and Johannessen`s great body of research, earthworms are not able to travel long distances, and require human assistance if they are to do so. Research in the 1980s suggested that the majority of earthworms present in the area of study had been introduced by European immigrants— European species of earthworm had been arriving since the 1600s with plants and farm animals. A minority of the earthworms were indigenous to parts of the southern United States where the last ice age did not extend. A smaller minority of earthworms that were discovered in the deep organic soils along the west coast of British Columbia ,however, were categorized as Megascolecidea. Megascolecidea are Asian worms…"

Rare bat found in Kent

Rare bat found in Kent for first time in 115 years

The Guardian October 5th 2019

One of Britain`s and northern Europe`s rarest and most elusive mammals has been discovered living in the east of England for the first time in 115 years. The return to Kent of the greater horseshoe bat has delighted and astounded conservationists ,who are now examining whether change in the climate is shifting the species` range. The bat is normally found only in Wales and the west of England.

The secretive, buff-coloured ,creature (Rhinolophus ferrumequinum) is one of Britain`s biggest bats. It frequently evades and challenges pursuers ,fluttering unseen through shadows and hiding underground in caves, tunnels and occasionally buildings...Joe Nunez-Mino,spokesperson for the Bat Conservation Trust,confirmed that the unusual recordings had been verified by national experts. "It is possible that an individual bat was blown off course or has travelled over from France...The Bat Conservation Trust says good farm and landscape management can mean huge potential for greater horseshoes. They need woodland, a lack of light pollution, pesticide-free grazed pasture with chemical free dung harbouring dung beetles, as well as moths, cockchafers and flies, plus tall continuous hedgerows that are not trimmed for up to 10 years.

Carl Marshall, Flying Snake co-editor said the news was very exciting though expected.

Attack by Giant Owl in Lancashire

2 SUNDAY PEOPLE, January 27, 1980

VILLAGE IN TERROR OF GIANT OWL

A VILLAGE is living in fear of a savage bird of prey . . . an owl.

Sunday People Reporter

And although owls are an officially protected species, RSPCA inspector Brian Oxley is gunning for this one.

After a series of attacks on humans, he believes it could kill.

The nightmare at Waterbarn, Rossendale, Lancs, began when the huge owl swooped on a five-year-old girl walking home with her mother.

It clung to her shoulder, and its razor-sharp talons slashed open the child's anorak.

Within an hour, a woman on her way to a local church meeting staggered into her daughter's nearby home with blood pouring from her head after a similar attack.

And on the same night an elderly woman fought off the owl with her shopping bag as it tried to savage her grandson.

Now, residents have imposed a curfew on their children.

Jean Sanderson, 31, whose mother was slashed, said: "The children are not allowed out after dark unless a parent is with them, and we all wear hats or hoods as protection.

"My mother was terrified. And my seven-year-old daughter won't even go to the Brownies while the owl is free."

Oxley admitted: "This case has me worried. Owls can be vicious. Their talons are like needles.

"They could easily kill a baby.

"This one seems to strike just after dusk—the danger period, when children are coming home from school.

"I've been out three nights a week trying to ambush the bird.

"I have to get it before it causes serious injury.

"If I can capture it alive, I will. But if I have to shoot it, I'll do that.

"I have to take a gamble on whether I'd be prosecuted."

GET IT DOWN

LUCIFER

"Sure, plenty of fish—but all fried!"

NO MEAN CITY!

A BUSINESSMAN'S guide to the most expensive cities of the world puts London way ahead of the rest—leaping to top place from 11th in just a year. Bed and breakfast at a first-class hotel now costs £65.50, says the guide. Next dearest city is Jeddah, Saudi Arabia—and Peking is cheapest.

Sunday People January 27th 1980 © British Newspaper Archive

Strange flashing object in Scotland

The Scotsman September 4th 1913

STRANGE OBJECT IN THE FIRTH OF FORTH.

Craigour Gardens, Gullane, September 1, 1913.

SIR,—While taking my usual walk on the shore yesterday afternoon, I saw a most peculiar object. About a mile west of Fidra Lighthouse there is a lot of rocky points and small bays, and on coming to one of these points I saw this thing keep flash, flashing on the surface of the water. It was from 3 to 4 inches above the waves, and looked to me to be something wooden. It looked about 2½ to 3 inches in diameter, and always seemed to be in a perpendicular position. The flashes seemed to come out of it at the surface of the water, and after the flash there was a puff of smoke and a crack like a little pistol. I timed the flashes on my watch, and there were from 70 to 75 per minute, all very irregular. The tide was almost at the full, and when I first saw the thing it was about twenty yards out, and as it came slowly westwards with the tide it got to about forty yards rounding the little bay. As it neared the next point of rocks (which took about forty-five minutes), the tide was on the turn, so it gradually got further out until it turned altogether and went off very fast on the tide in a north-easterly direction. Can any of your readers explain this wonderful thing?—I am, &c.

ANDW. BRUNTON.

© British Newspaper Archive

Letters to Fate magazine

Here is another selection (thanks to Gary Mangiacopra for providing me with them) of letters to Fate magazine in the 1950s.

Fate March 1954, vol 7 number 3,Issue 48

JOE ROUSH`S SEA SERPENT

They`re telling this story down around Bainbridge,Ohio, whenever someone mentions Slaven`s Pond. That`s where Joe Roush saw the sea serpent. Oh,it wasn`t much of a sea serpent as sea serpent`s go. Six or eight feet long,Joe says, and big around as a stovepipe. Still that`s pretty big for Slaven`s Pond,state of Ohio, U.S.A.

Joe is a respected farmer in the neighbourhood. "I was driving past the pond on my tractor," he explained to Bob Hooks of the Colombus Citizen. "It was laying right over there." He pointed to Slaven`s Pond. Joe watched the animal for 15 minutes or so. It would sink in the middle then gradually submerged. Then it would reappear at the same spot moments later. Lots of other people fishing in the pond had reported the creature before. Mostly they don`t fish there any more.

For a time Joe Roush figured he and his brother would drag the pond for the serpent. But then he got to thinking, "What would we do with it if we caught it." So they didn`t drag.

Fate April 1954 , vol 7 number 4,Issue number 49

**IN "GOD`S ZOO"** Is an "abominable snowman" preserved in Tibet? A Tibetan lama showed up in Kalimpong, India,recently,and said yes. Lama Chhemed Ridgzin declared that he had seen the preserved bodies of two "snowmen" in "God`s Zoo" — a holy place in a Tibetan monastery where the remains of all creatures from man to flies are kept for worship.

The lama said the creatures are friendly eight-foot apes who wouldn`t hurt a man unless provoked. He described the "yeti" as having a thick flat skull, dark brown face, short tail and a body covered with 1 1/2 inch fur.

THE BLOND GHOST Fate August 1954, vol 7 number 8, Issue number 53

In England, Edward Westwood of Dudley claims there is a blond ghost in his house who wears lipstick and walks around nights with a bald-headed companion. He has appealed to the Birmingham Psychic Research Society to have investigators spend a night in his home.

Westwood has moved out of his house temporarily .He claims the pretty blond tipped one member of his family out of bed, pulled the hair of another and kept everyone awake nights by ringing a ghostly alarm clock.

WHAT A BIRD! Fate September 1954, vol 7 number 9, Issue number 54

George B.Watterson of Philadelphia was fishing near Timagamin ,Ontario,about 6 miles north of North Bay early in May. He came back excitedly reporting that he had seen a strange bird with two sets of wings. He said it was jet black and flew at terrific speed.

Ontario officials were sceptical.

CLOCK STOPS AT DEATH Fate August 1955, vol 8, number 8 Issue number 65

The Clock Stopped, Too

For 40 years the clock that hung on the wall in the home of Margaret Stephens,84,kept perfect time. Recently it stopped at 3:00 A.M.— the exact moment she died. Since then relatives living in the dead woman`s Midland,Ontario,home have tinkered with the clock in an effort to make it run again. But the clock resists all efforts to keep it ticking.

THE MESSAGE OF THE CLAM Fate April 1955, vol 8, number 4 Issue number 61

Clarence Cheek was born in Washington, D.C. on May 26,1874,which makes him 80 years old. And at 80, Mr Cheek is able to stand on his feet eight hours a day and work with his hands. He shucks clams, when he`s in a hurry, Mr Cheek can shuck 15 clams a minute and he figures he has opened 20 million clams in his life time.

But never in all his "born days" ,Mr Cheek told Harmon W.Nichols of the United Press,had he ever seen anything like this: He opened a clam. And inside was a date: " 4-2-43" April 2, 1943. And beneath it was a double set of initials like kids carve in tree trunks. The initials were "MOT-UMI." Mr Cheek can`t explain it. He says clams don`t open up wide enough to let anything like that be done to them — and still live. And besides, he says out of his experience with 20 million clams, if anybody did engrave such a message on a clam it would die.

SPARROWS RESCUE SPARROW Fate April 1955, vol 8, number 4 Issue number 61 "From my window I saw a sparrow wedged between two wires on a telegraph pole," writes Mrs E.J. Wiltshire in the London *Sunday Express*— "Other sparrows flew back and forth with excited twitters and calls. Then the birds flew one by one onto the lower wire until there were about 30 sparrows strung in a row

along it.

"They all closed up near the imprisoned sparrow and quite suddenly the lower wire sagged. With loud twitters and noise of wings the row of birds rose in the air, the imprisoned sparrow with them. "

ESSAY ON JELLYFISH Fate April 1955 vol 8, number 4, issue number 61

Freshwater jellyfish are a miracle of nature, it is claimed. But at the Cleveland Aquarium in Gordon Park one day not long ago there was a tank containing 50 of them on display.

The jellyfish suddenly appeared in Crystal Lake,which serves as the water supply for Ravenna, Ohio. They were about the size of a dollar and looked a little like transparent umbrellas , trailing a dozen or so tentacles along their rims. These tentacles had small coiled muscles with a spring action which forces poison from the animal`s stinging cells. The poison paralyzes or kills the small animals which are stung.

Although there are thousands of species of ocean jellyfish, only four are known to live in fresh water and two of these have been found only in Africa. They are extremely rare in this country, no one knows where the Crystal Lake jellyfish came from, or how.

An even stranger jellyfish mystery occurred in Texas. Mrs W.M.Reynolds of Austin went out in her front yard rain last October. And there were two jellyfish, big as baseballs.